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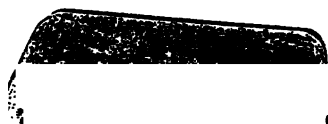
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CARL WERNER,

AN IMAGINATIVE STORY;

WITH OTHER

TALES OF IMAGINATION.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"THE YEMASSE," "GUY RIVERS,"
"MELLICHAMPE," &c.

i.e., Wm. Gummere, &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

NEW YORK:

GEORGE ADLARD, 46 BROADWAY.

1838.

CHR

ROY VAN
JLBN
VIA TEL

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE first story in this collection is founded upon a passage from an ancient monkish legend, which the lover of antiquarian lore will most probably remember. The treatment of the subject is, however, entirely my own; and the circumstance in the history of the two young men, upon which the catastrophe depends, is too frequent among the thoughtless of every nation to make it the peculiar property of any. The strifes between the rival moral principles of good and evil, have also been a subject of frequent celebration in the form of allegory; though, I believe, that, in this respect, my claim to originality will also be undisputed. In the character of the venerable guest of Matilda, it will be seen that I have ventured upon a faint delineation of one of the apostles, and that I have moreover presumed to suggest a notion of their continued toils on earth in the cause of heaven. Such a theory does not, it appears to me, seem altogether incompatible with the history of the strifes of good and evil, as afforded by the sacred volume; and, indeed, must somewhat help us in the hope which we entertain, according to the holy promise, of the final and complete triumph of the former. I trust, in what I have done, I will not be found to have trespassed beyond the limits of propriety. The other tales, with, perhaps, a single exception, belong to the same moral imaginative class with the first. They have been written at various periods in my brief career of authorship. Two of them, it may be well to state, were published with other titles than they bear in this collection. The change was made in consequence of my discovering subsequently that similar titles had been employed by other writers, which might, to the casual reader, suggest an idea of identity between them, which exists neither in the subject, nor the mode of treatment. They are only republished in this collection as they belong properly to the classification which distinguishes the work.

CARL WERNER.

AN IMAGINATIVE STORY.

I.

“WITH what a sober and saintly sweetness do these evening lights stream around us. What a spiritual atmosphere is here! Do you not feel it?”

My friend did not immediately answer my question, and when he did, his reply was rather to the mood of mind in which I had spoken, than to the words which I had uttered. We were walking, towards the close of day, in one of the deepest parts of a German forest, through which the sunlight penetrated only with imperfect and broken rays. The vista, which was limited by the dusk, was covered with flitting shadows, and wild aspects, that won us farther at each succeeding moment in their pursuit. The cathedral picturesqueness of the scene warm-

ed us both, and when my friend replied to me, I felt that our fancies were the same.

"You have no faith, I believe, in popular superstitions—you never yield yourself up to your dreams?"

Something of a feeling of self-esteem kept me from answering sincerely to this question. I felt, at that instant, a guilty consciousness of a growing respect for the legends of the wonder-loving land in which I wandered. My answer was evasive.

"What mean you—your question is a wide one?"

"Elsewhere it might be,—but here—here in Germany—it would seem specific enough. Briefly—you have no faith in ghosts—you do not believe in the thousand and one stories which imagination hourly weaves for the ear and the apprehensions of credulity."

"To speak truly, I have not often thought of this matter until now. The *genius loci* has somewhat provoked my fancy, and triumphed over my indifference—if indifference it be. Ghost stories, though frequent enough, are, as frequently, subjects of common ridicule; and the hearer, if he does believe, finds it prudent to keep his faith secret, if it be only to escape the laughter of his

companions. This may have been the case with me, and from seeking to deceive my neighbors on this head, it is not improbable that I have fully succeeded in at last deceiving myself; and have come to doubt sincerely. But of this I will not be certain. I am not sure that I should not partake of the sensibilities of any timid urchin, at the sudden appearance of any suspicious object in any suspicious place."

"Ha! ha! I see you are no sceptic. You are for the ghosts — you certainly believe in them."

"Not so!" I replied, somewhat hastily; "I cannot be said to believe or disbelieve. I have no facts — no opinions — on the subject, and therefore cannot be supposed to have arrived at any conviction respecting it. I have scarcely given it a thought, and my impressions are rather those of the temperament and memory than the mind. Warm blood makes me jump frequently to conclusions upon which I never think; and the stories of boyhood, in this respect, will, long after the boy has become a man, stagger his strength with the images produced on his imagination by a grand-dame's narratives at that susceptible period. My notions of the marvellous arise almost entirely from my feelings — feelings kindled by such stories, and, it may be, rendered vivid by a natural

tinct of superstition, which few of us seem to be free from, and which may, perhaps, be considered the best of arguments in defence of such a faith."

My friend made no immediate answer—a pause ensued in our speech, but not in our movement. We walked on, and the shadows became more thick around us. The scattered lights of evening grew fainter and fewer, and I perceived that the mood of my companion, like my own, had undergone a corresponding change. Sad thoughts mingled with strange thoughts in our minds, and when he again spoke, it was evident that he felt the night. He resumed the subject.

"I have not been willing to believe, but I feel, and feeling brings the faith. I have reason to suspect myself of a leaning to these superstitions, and discover myself inclining to conviction the more I indulge in solitude. Solitude is one of the parents of superstition. The constant wakefulness and warring strifes of selfish interests, which prevail in the city and among the crowd, drive away such thoughts, and, indeed, all thoughts which incline to reverence; and it is only when I get into the country—among these solemn shades and deep recesses—that I find my superstitions coming back to me with a thousand other sensibilities. It is then that my memory

goes over the old grounds of my childhood ; and that the fancies of an early romance become invigorated within me :—it is then that I give credence to the unaccountable story that we sometimes hear from the lips of more credulous or more experienced companions. Their earnestness and faith strengthen and awaken ours—the fancy grows into form, and the form, at length, from frequent contemplation, becomes almost sensible to the touch. We continue to contemplate until we believe ; and there is not a faculty or sense that we have, which does not at last become satisfied, along with our fancies, of the rich reality which the latter have but dreamed.”

“I am not so sure that they dream only,” was my serious reply. “Why, if the doctrine of the soul’s immortality be true—why should it not return to the spot which kindred affections have made holy—why may it not do a service to the living?—prevent a wrong?—reveal a secret, or by some ministry, which could not have been performed so well by any but itself, do that which may help the surviving to some withheld rights, to some suppressed truth—or to some unlooked for means of safety from tyranny and injustice?”

“True—that might have been an argument at one period in the history of the world ; but the

world has grown wiser, if not better, in later days ! — a thousand modes are now in our possession for discovering the truth, to one at that time when spirits were allowed to return to earth. The days of miracle are gone by. The ‘spirits from the vasty deep’ do not come to us, however loudly we may call for them.”

“Who shall say that ?” was my reply. “Who shall answer for the necessity. It may occur now as it has occurred before, nor is it an argument against the belief, that man has grown wise enough to find out the truth for himself, after judicial forms, without the need of any such revisitings of the moon. If wisdom has grown mighty to find out the truth, crime has also grown proportionably cunning to conceal it ; and virtue suffers the injustice, and vice escapes, even now, from a just punishment, quite too frequently, when it were to be desired that some honest ghost could be evoked from the grave, to set the erring judgment of man aright. Coleridge considers it a conclusive argument against the notion, that the ghost of a man’s breeches should appear with him. This may be a good joke, but it is a poor argument. If it be once admitted, that for wise and beneficial purposes the just Providence shall permit the departed spirit to return to the earth, where it once abode,

it will be necessary that it should put on that garb and appearance which shall make it more readily known by those whom it seeks ; since its purpose, in its return to earth, might only be effected by its appearance in proper person. I can conceive of no difficulty in this ; since it must be obvious that as the appearance of the spectre is the work of God, himself, with Him the toil is equally easy of giving the spirit its guise of flesh and fashion, and of preparing the mind of the spectator so that his eye shall behold the object, whether it appear in reality or not."

"The subject is one," said my friend, "which invariably forces itself upon me when I am in solitude. We are now in a place singularly accommodated to thoughts and things of this nature. There is a venerable gloom and gravity about these old trees. You see that none of them are young, yet the grounds have neither been cleared nor grubbed, to my recollection, for many years. The aged branches have stretched out innumerable arms, and bend, with their accumulated weight of years upon them, even to the ground. They have the air of a group of sainted Druids, such as the Romans annihilated. Black and frowning, yonder mountain overhangs the wood, protecting, yet threatening. It has the look of a blasted

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thing, and it must be a haunted one. The ruins which you behold at a little distance to the left, admirably consort with the rest of the picture. A gray mist seems to hang over and to hallow them, until even the beautiful knoll of green which rises in front of them seems offensively garish from the exceeding depth of its contrast. Those are the ruins of an ancient monastery, which the superstitious fancies of the neighborhood have long since peopled with a fraternity of immaterials, sufficiently numerous and wild to consecrate to their peculiar purposes a situation of the kind. They are not often intruded upon, except by myself; and as I have a story to tell which properly belongs to them, it will not be out of place if I tell it to you there. Some of the old monuments will give us a pleasant seat, and among the dead only, as we then shall be, we shall be in no danger of suffering interruption or disturbance from the idle footstep of the obtrusive living."

II.

"We are in Germany," continued my companion;—"of course I do not tell you this with any other object, than simply to remind you, that you

are in a land, of all others, one of the most renowned for its superstitions, its wild fancies, its marvellous imaginations. The minds of its people have become spiritualized by the popular faith; and thought takes the shape of poetry at its birth, and fancy is busy every where. Their rivers and their rocks, their green knolls and sinking valleys, their dense forests, wild wastes, and deserted ruins, like these around us, are all haunted and venerable. The dell and dingle have their different spirits, the wood and rivulet theirs; and the gentle-hearted peasants who inhabit them are, in some instances, almost as rigidly tenacious of the privileges of the *genius loci*, as they are of their own rights and religion. A tale of *diablerie* will not, therefore, seem out of place, in a region so abundantly supplied with this material; and the story which I am about to relate to you, though differing materially from those which we are accustomed to hear, is yet as native to this neighborhood as any of the rest. The parties who figure in it, were born in the little hamlet of ———, not a mile distant, and you will hear the story from any of the villagers to whom you may refer for confirmation of it.

“It is now about fifty years since the events which I am about to relate to you are said to have occurred. The village of ——— stood then

pretty much as it does now, except that there were then two families in it, of which there are no descendants or surviving relics now. The family of Herman Ottfried was one of the most respectable in it; nor was that of Carl Werner less so. The former consisted only of Herman, and the fair Matilda, his sister; while that of Carl Werner existed in himself alone. He was an only child, whose mother had been long since dead, and whose father had died just before the time when my narrative begins. Herman was about twenty-five years of age, Carl Werner not more than twenty-one — yet they were inseparable friends. Matilda, the sister of Herman, was but seventeen; and it is more than probable, that the great intimacy between Carl and Herman, and the strong regard which the former professed for the latter, arose from the yet stronger feeling which he entertained for the sister. But of this anon. Herman was a good natured, laughing, and mischievous creature, ready always for fun and frolic, not easily apprehensive of danger, nor always scrupulous about proprieties in his pranks. He had good sense enough to keep him from any extravagant folly, or extreme rashness; and good feeling enough to restrain him from any excess which might inflict pain upon the deserving and the good. He was

of graceful person, manly and strong, brave, generous, and well-principled. The favorite of the village, he was yet wanting in one of those traits of character in which all beside him were abundantly provided—he had no more faith in a ghost than he had in a sermon; and though not deficient in proper veneration, he had but slight regard for either.

“In this respect, as in several others, he differed greatly from his more youthful friend and companion, Carl Werner. Carl was superstitious to the last degree; his memory was perfectly crowded with legends the most extravagant, and he had a feverish and perpetual desire, continually, to increase his collection. He was, in very truth, a dreamer—one of those gifted men, who see strange sights and hear uncommon sounds, which are denied to the vulgar faculty; and his senses were accordingly employed always in scenting out and searching after the supernatural. But let me not be understood to say that Carl was a simpleton. Far from it. He was, in reality, as I have phrased it already, a highly gifted man. He was a poet—a man of quick and daring imagination—one whose verses were full of fire, and acknowledged to be of more than ordinary merit,—but he was rather too much of a mystic. Deeply impregna-

ted with the traditionary lore of 'The Teuton,' and irritably alive to all its exciting influences, the fancy which was in him, the active and subtle spirit of his thoughts, gathered from all objects and associations food and stimulant for its own continued exercise. His very existence, so deeply had he drank of the witch beverage and been led away into the haunted forests of his fancy, had become rather metaphysical than real. His life was passed in dreams; and even his love for Matilda, so far from humanizing his mind and binding it to earth, seemed to have the effect of elevating it the more, and of making it hourly more and more spiritual; until, at length, he appeared to regard the maiden rather as a creation of his thought—a dream of heaven—than an object for the contemplation and the enjoyment of his senses. His life was thus diseased by his imagination, while yet in the green, in the blossom, and the bud.

III.

“Between Herman and his sister, the soul and person of Carl Werner were pretty evenly divided. When not with one, he was with the other; and when not separately with either, he was sure

to be with both. Though the tastes and tempers of the two young men seemed greatly to differ to the common eye, their sympathies ran strangely together. Their sports and studies, though not alike, seemed nevertheless to bring them together always. Their habits were equally wandering, and while the poetry of Carl made him musing, meditative, and abstracted in his habits, it led him the more to delight in those practical tendencies in the mind of his companion, which suggested a character directly the reverse. Herman, too, was pleased with the fellowship of a thinking being, and one who could furnish names and definitions for all his own occasional and half-digested imaginings and thoughts. They had neither of them much system in their pursuits, and far less in their studies. Books they read, not by selection, but as they happened to fall into their hands; or, rather, Carl would read them, and describe their character and unfold their contents to his companion, who, in his own experience, could most generally remember adventures to correspond with and match those which Carl related to him. In this manner they became mutual dependants, and hence, some of the secret of their intimacy. They would follow—each—without much, or at best with a momentary opposition—the moods and prompt-

ings of the other—the momentary impulse being the sufficient governor,—and to that they most generally left the direction of studies and amusements alike. The feeling which prompted the one, if not exactly like that which filled the bosom of the other, was seldom offensive to it: and we need not wonder, thus situated and circumstanced, if they grew together, to the almost complete exclusion of all the village beside—the fair and gentle Matilda alone being excepted.

IV.

“Let not my preliminaries fatigue you. I cannot get on so well without them. My narrative has a comprehensive ground-work, and I must bring the several more striking features of the locality, in due order, and, not precipitately, before your eye. Having prepared you, I will now proceed:—

“Living, as they did, in the neighboring village, and possessed of tastes equally wandering, and, in the case of Carl, so mingled with romance, it will not be thought surprising if they spent a great deal of their leisure time among these old ruins. They were ruins then, and no obtrusive utilitarian

has presumed, as you may see, to take from their gray loveliness by making them more useful. The charm of the spot is the same now as then — if possible, indeed, the beauty of the ruins is even greater, for the walls have suffered from subsequent tempests, and desolation has made more complete her broken temple. Time is the ally of romance, and decay takes nothing from her honors ! The source and secret of their beauty have been steadily increasing ; and the domain, loved by the German youth of whom we speak, is, perhaps, scarcely less attractive now to us. Touched, as these dismembered and massive fragments at this moment are, by the mellow hues of the fleeting and flickering sunlight, they are, in my eyes, immeasurably beautiful ; and seem to me as they did to Carl Werner, a fitting abode for the sleepless and sad spirit—doomed to its midnight vigil of a thousand years.

“ The imagination of Carl Werner had peopled these ruins with a countless host of inmates, with wild traditions, with the most pitiable and strange narratives. It was the theatre where his invention became most active, and where he continually exercised it, as much for his own, as for the pleasure which it gave to Matilda and Herman. He had explored the many cells which abound among the

ruins—he had groped through the ancient chambers, until he had, from conjectures frequently exercised, come to the belief that he could actually assign the various uses to which they were put:—and, in some cases, through the aid of local tradition and domestic history, he even ventured so far as to say who were their occupants. Though superstitious to the last degree, and most wilfully credulous, Carl Werner had no idle fears. The abbey was his favorite resort even at midnight, and with Herman, who was something of a daredevil, along with him, a ramble through the old chambers at night, when the rising moon began to peep through the cracks and fissures, was a favorite mode with Carl Werner of passing those pleasant hours. It is true, that, at such times, Matilda never ventured along with the two; but the warm and spirited fancy of Carl enabled him to embody for her ears, when they met, the sweet, strange thoughts of his mind, which, at such periods, formed the topic of conversation between him and his companion. These were themes upon which Carl never failed to be eloquent, and Matilda always loved to hear. At other times, the three would wander while the day lasted, in a sort of mental and dreamy unconsciousness, among the broken walls, turning thoughtlessly over the mar-

ble stones, laboring now and then to decipher the inscriptions, and toiling through the ancient grounds and over the green grave knolls about the edifice ; until, as the sun began to wane, Matilda, with a growing and beautiful timidity — always becoming in a young and lovely woman — would hurry them homeward, leaving the unfinished story of Carl to find its conclusion at the evening fireside, which generally brought them all together like one family. They were soon to become one, it may as well be said, for, seizing a favorable moment, the gentle and fond Carl had whispered to the maiden that he loved her, and she did not hesitate long to promise that she would be his. The time was designated for the nuptials, and the two were quite as happy as mutual love, and so pleasant a hope, could possibly make them.

V.

“One afternoon, a few weeks prior to the time appointed for the marriage, Carl and Matilda went forth upon their usual rambles. Herman went not with them. He had gone away from the village on some alleged business, though, it is more than probable, that he had simply excused himself, with

a delicate sense of propriety, from adding to a party which under existing circumstances could do very well without him. The fond Carl had more than once been indebted in this manner to the kind consideration of his friend. Thus, left to themselves, the lovers wandered off in the usual direction, and were soon embosomed in the haunted shades of the ancient abbey. They seated themselves among the monuments, and discoursed of the old time stories; and, with each remembered legend, the timid Matilda, with a most natural fear, would creep closer to her lover, and the fond Carl, with a most natural protection, at length encircled her waist with his arms; and the ghosts of ancient years were forgotten by the happy pair, in the delicious realities of their present situation.

“But a sudden step, as of one approaching, disturbed their dream of felicity. It was Herman. He came, with an air of impatient pleasure and slow regret, mingled up in his manner. As he drew nigh, he handed a letter to Carl, and bade him read it.

“‘It is from my uncle, old Ulrich Outfried of Amsterdam, and he writes for me to come to him immediately. The place he promised me is at length vacant, and I must lose no time to secure it—I must leave you.’

“‘Leave us, dear brother!’ exclaimed Matilda.

“‘Leave us, Herman!’ said Carl.

“‘Ay, leave you!’ replied the brother, ‘leave you, to be sure. Would you have me sit here, purring like a tame cat all my life, when there I have a chance to be somebody, and see the great city.’

“‘And will you leave us, Herman?’ said the girl reproachfully, and the tears stood in her eyes.

“‘Pshaw, ’Tilda! no tears now, I beg you. They’re not true—they’re not natural. You know you won’t miss me, and there’s no reason why you should. You have Carl there, and he’ll be more to you than ever I can be. He suits you better; and I know him too well to be afraid to leave you to his hands.’

“‘Dear Herman!’ said Carl, ‘but you will not go soon—you will stay to the wedding.’

“‘I can’t—the letter, you see, urges my instant departure; and I’m too anxious to get the place to risk the loss of it by any idle delay. It’s true, I’m sorry to part with you; but, as I said, I leave you both in good hands. You love ’Tilda, and she loves you, and I believe you will be quite as happy with each other, as if I looked on myself, and saw all your happiness.’

“The hand of Carl pressed that of Matilda, and

her's returned the pressure, at these words. Carl then demanded of Herman when he proposed to set forth. His prompt answer surprised and pained his hearers.

“‘To-morrow,’ said he, ‘at early dawn, I travel.’

“‘To-morrow!’ exclaimed Matilda, ‘dear brother, you cannot mean it!’

“‘So soon, Herman!’ said Carl.


“‘Ay, to-morrow—so soon!’ was the reply. ‘It’s hard. I find it harder than I thought, to leave you—you, dear Tilda—for you have been a dear, sweet sister to me always; and you Carl, who have been a brother after my heart’s wish: I find it very hard to leave you, but I can’t help it; nor, indeed, if I could, would I. The place is every thing to me, and I can make my fortune in it. My uncle, if I please him, promises to take me with him into business. Read the letter, Carl—see how fairly the good old fellow speaks. He is a good old fellow—he always loved me. I was his favorite, Tilda—he never thought much of you. But, never you mind—there’s no good fortune that comes to Herman that you shall not share—both of you. So, it matters not much which of us the old man loved—it’s the same

thing ; but go I must, and, as I've told you already, I go to-morrow.'


"This seemed a settled matter in the mind of Herman, and it produced a melancholy feeling in that of Carl. It seemed to impress Matilda even more gloomily, as well it might ; for Herman was an only brother, and having neither mother nor father, the privation, she well knew, must be severely felt. She had no longer spirit to remain abroad, and closely attended by the young men, she returned, in sorrowful temper, to her cottage.

VI.

"You may be sure that was a gloomy evening in the house of Matilda ; and not even the well-satisfied love of the betrothed, could make it otherwise to either of them. Herman was quite too dear to his sister and his friend, to suffer them, at such a moment, to feel their own felicity as perfect, just when they were about to be deprived of him, perhaps for ever. The maiden felt so unhappy, that she retired at an early hour, and the two young men wandered forth to talk over their several projects, and the various, and we may add, the sorrowful thoughts, with which their approaching



separation had filled them both. They had been so long as one—so perfectly inseparable, hitherto—that it is not to be wondered at, if they were almost unmanned by it. Carl, indeed, suffered far more than Herman. The latter had the excitements of a new world in promise before him—the prospects of bettering his fortunes, and, besides this, he was of a more elastic and lively temper than his friend. He could very well bestow consolation, where other wanderers would have needed it. Carl had been always a dependant upon Herman, whose excellent spirits and generous mood had frequently neutralized the excessive morbidness of his imagination; and when the former thought of this, and of his weakness in many respects, he exaggerated to his own mind the greatness of the privation which he was about to undergo. Herman tried his best to console him, and in the earnestness of their mutual thoughts, they gave no heed to their wanderings. In the first moment of external consciousness, Carl looked up, and the ruins of the ancient abbey were before them. It was a fitting place for their last interview and private conference. The silence and the gloom of the spot accorded meetly with the sadness in their bosoms, and they at once entered the sanctuary. They seated themselves upon one of



the broken monuments, and sat for some moments in a moody silence. At length, Carl spoke as follows :

“ ‘ I feel cold all over, Herman, as if a breath from that old vault had breathed upon me. Your contemplated journey affects me strangely. I know not how I shall bear it. I shall not often ramble among these ruins—I may have the disposition to do so—I know I will—but I shall not have the courage.’

“ ‘ Pshaw !’ exclaimed the bolder Herman—
‘ how you talk. I know you better than you do yourself, and venture to predict that when I am gone you will be here oftener than ever. You love these ruins.’

“ ‘ I do—I confess it !—they are to me sacred, if only for their recollections,’ said Carl.

“ ‘ And ghosts !’ continued Herman with a gentle laugh. ‘ You love their ghosts, I think, even more than their recollections.’

“ ‘ Ay, could I see them,’ said the other. ‘ But they are shy ghosts, and—did you not hear a breathing ?’

“ Carl turned and looked in the direction of the old vault, as he spoke these words, but Herman only laughed at him. Carl laughed too, a mo-

ment after, when he perceived that his weakness had been observed by his friend.

“ ‘You have nearly roused them, Carl,’ said Herman, after his quiet chuckle had subsided. ‘But for my laugh they would have been about you. You would have conjured the reverend abbot from that shattered vault, and a pretty story you would have of it.’

“ ‘Perhaps’—said Carl; ‘and you would have listened to the story, Herman, without a single interruption. Why is that? Why is it that you can enjoy a ghost story without believing in the ghost?’

“ ‘Why do we enjoy a puzzle which we know can be undone?—a mystery—when a moment’s reflection teaches us that it is no mystery? It is because the human mind finds a pleasure in that which is ingenious—in any thing which shows intellectual power. A fairy tale has a spell for all senses, not because we believe in its magic—in its subtlety—in its strange devices and wild conceits; but, that these subtleties, spells, and devices, appeal to natural desires and attributes of the mind of man. They are beautiful, and as the appreciation of which is beautiful, forms the legitimate object in the exercise of taste, they commend themselves to every intellect or imagination

that possesses even common activity. You, perhaps, are less fortunate than myself, since you believe in the ghost ; and a natural sense of apprehension, which your faith necessarily excites in your mind, while the story is telling, subtracts from the perfect satisfaction with which—were you as incredulous as myself—you would hear or tell it. You tremble while you narrate, and your eyes are forever looking round to see the object which your fancy conjures up.'

"True, but I do not cease to tell the story. I go on—I would go on, though I beheld the ghost.'

"I doubt you!" boldly said the other. 'I believe you might try to do so, for I know the extent of your moral courage ; but your imagination is too powerful for your control ; and this I sometimes fear. I sometimes fear that you may suffer greatly, when I am gone, in the conflict between your imaginative faculty, and your good sense. While I was with you, I had no fear ; for when you looked round for the ghost, I laid it with a laugh. It will rise and haunt you when I am gone.'

"How can you speak thus, or fear this, when, in the same breath, you deny its existence?" demanded Carl.

“ ‘Oh, I do not deny its existence *to you*,’ said Herman — ‘we can always have the ghost we call for, for imagination is a god. It is the only creator under heaven. Yours is of this sort, and the worlds you people are sometimes too extensive for your sway. They will rebel against you.’

“ ‘I fear them not!’ said Carl. ‘It is my joy to create, and I sometimes pray that with my bodily eyes I may behold the dim but glorious visions of my mind. Yon old abbot, sleeping in the dust and sanctity of a thousand years,—could he rise before me now and answer a few questions, I should be most happy.’

“ ‘Do not trouble yourself to call upon him—he will not trouble himself to come.’

“ ‘Yet, I am sure,’ responded the reverent Carl, turning an anxious look upon the vault, as if soliciting the buried saint to give the lie to his comrade, ‘yet, I am sure, that it is not because he cannot.’

“ ‘What other reason!’ said Herman. ‘He cannot, my dear Carl, and if he could, he would not. He sees—if the dead may see aught—all around him that he hath ever known or loved in life; and for us, whom in life he never knew, he hath too little sympathy, to come at our bidding.’

There might be some motive for those lately dead to reappear at the requisition of those who still have human and earthly affections struggling with the cares and woes of earth ; and I would that it were possible we could evoke them. I, too, should be a summoner, Carl—I, too, should pray that my bodily eyes might behold—not the objects of my mind, but the creatures of my heart ! I would give worlds, if I had them, once more to behold my dear mother.'

" ' Could she know your wish, Herman, would she not appear, think you ? ' demanded Carl.

" ' The suggestion makes against your argument, Carl,' replied the other—' immortal as she is, she must know, she must hear my wish ; yet she does not appear ! wherefore does she not ?—she cannot—it is written—she cannot ; and it is, perhaps, wise and well that she cannot. It might alter my plans—it might affect my purposes—it might disturb the existing condition of things without making them better.'

" ' Herman,—could I believe with you, I should be unhappy ; but I cannot. I feel assured that the spirit may return, and make itself known. I do not say visibly to the eye, but in some way or other, to one or more of the senses. Do you re-

member the story of Dame Ulrica, and the silks that rustled in the tiring chamber?"

"‘Ah, no more of that, Carl; and as you are now getting fairly on the track of the hobgoblins, we may as well stop our confabulation, else shall we not go to bed to-night. Of one thing be sure, if I can revisit you after death, I will ——’"

"‘Will you promise me *that*, Herman?' demanded the other eagerly.

"‘Ay, that will I, though I shall try to do it in such a manner as not to scare you. I shall sneak in like a gentle ghost, and shall speak to you in the softest language. Will you really be glad to see me?"

"‘Glad! — you will make me happy. It will be a prayer realized. Promise me, dear Herman! — we are about to separate, we know not with what destiny before us. The means of communication are few between us, and our anxiety to know of each other will sometimes shoot far ahead of our capacity to receive or yield intelligence. Promise me — though heaven grant that you may live long years after me — that should any thing befall you, and the power be with you, you will come to me — you will tell me of your own condition, and guide me aright in mine; for my sake, and for the sake of your dear sister, who will so

soon be a part of my life. Will you do this — will you promise this, dear Herman.'

" 'I will — to be sure, I will, Carl,' was the reply.

" 'Seriously — solemnly ?' demanded Carl.

" 'Seriously — solemnly !' said the other ; ' but,' he continued — ' if I am to take all this trouble, and expose myself to all risks of wind and weather merely to oblige you, you must do me a similar favor ; for, though I do not believe in any such power on the part of the spirit once gone from earth, nor am I particularly curious on the subject ; yet, while agreeing to satisfy you, Carl, I may just as well exact a similar promise from yourself. Dead or alive, Carl, it will always give me pleasure to see you. I have loved you as a brother, in life — I have no fear to behold you after death.'

" ' It is a pledge — a promise, Herman !' was the ready answer ; and with the utterance of the pledge, a hollow laugh resounded from the dismembered vault of the aged abbot.

VII.

They sprang at once to their feet. Herman laughed back in return, but he remained where he

was. Carl trembled like a leaf, but he leapt over the stone on which he had been sitting, and made his way fearlessly towards the vault. Herman followed him. The marble of which the vault had been built was fractured in several places, so that the interior was clearly visible from without. Carl would have entered it, but Herman opposed his doing so.

“ ‘Why should you go in — we can see the venerable dust where we stand,’ and the eyes of the two peered into the now silent chamber with a scrutinizing gaze that promised to suffer nothing to escape them.

“ ‘Look !’ said Carl ; ‘ look, Herman ! dost thou not see !’ and he pointed to a corner of the vault while speaking.

“ The eyes of Herman saw nothing, however, or he was not willing to acknowledge that they did ; but Carl was more ready to believe, and consequently more able to see, for, even while he pointed out the object of his sight to Herman, he watched it as it glided away through an aperture of the vault—a pale bluish flame—a fragment, as it were, of light—that seemed first to crawl along the walls of the chamber, and then suddenly to disappear through one of its many fissures.

“ ‘What is it that you see? I see nothing,’ said Herman.


“ ‘A light like that of a taper—a small, creeping light, that passed out of the corner to the east.’

“ ‘Some slimy worm,’ said Herman, ‘though I did not see it at all.’

“ ‘Strange!’ exclaimed Carl; ‘but you heard the laugh, Herman?’

“ ‘Yes,’ said the other, ‘but whether it came from the vault, or from the opposite wall, I will not pretend to say. Some urchin may think to frighten us from the other side. We will look in that quarter.’

“ Carl now followed his companion, but he followed him unwillingly. Like all true romancers, he had got just enough of the mystery. He was unwilling to press the matter farther, lest he should discover that which might jeopard his prize—which might enable him, indeed, to ‘point the moral,’ but which would spoil, rather than ‘adorn, the tale.’ This, however, was the desire of Herman. He would have given as much to discover that the source of the laugh was human, as Carl would have bestowed to prevent such a discovery. The hopes of the latter prevailed. They searched behind the suspected walls, but found nothing;



and the benefit of the laugh was clearly with the superstitious Carl. After this they left the ruins. The hour was getting late, and as they had still a great deal to say of sublunary concerns, it did not need that they should take the haunted abbey for this purpose. The next morning Herman took his departure. Carl saw him a little way upon the road; and when they were about to separate, one of the last words of Carl was to remind him about his promise. Herman laughed, but freely renewed it. Was it a fancy of Carl, or did he hear the laugh faintly repeated among the rocks behind them, several seconds after his companion had disappeared. It might be an echo merely, but the circumstance troubled the mind of Carl, who could not avoid thinking of it for weeks after.

VIII.

“At length the dreams of the dreamer gave way to more urgent realities. He became a married man; and his bosom was too much filled with the thoughts of Matilda, and his eyes were too much occupied with gazing upon her, to permit of the intrusion of any busy ghost or wandering vision upon either thought or sight. Marriage has a

wonderful tendency towards making men practical. The tendency, indeed, is sometimes too direct and rapid to be altogether pleasant. Not that this was the case with Carl. Far from it. He was improved in more respects than one in the change of his condition. His mind needed some qualifying and subduing influence to change its direction—to turn it from the too constant contemplation of those baseless fabrics which had heretofore but too much occupied its regards; and to bring it back to human necessities, and, through their medium, to the just appreciation of merely human joys. It is no less true than strange, that for the first three weeks after marriage, Carl did not dream at all, as had been, for as many years before, his nightly, and, to speak truth, his daily custom. For three whole weeks he lived a common man—had earthly notions of things—addressed himself to earthly labors—and did not once, in all that time, pay a single visit to the ancient abbey. But when the three weeks were over, he began again to dream, and to wander. The old abbey again received him as a constant visitor, and the presence of Matilda with him did not greatly lessen his devotion to the sanctity and superstitions of the spot.

“Perhaps, indeed, it was Matilda that somewhat contributed to the superstitions of her husband.

She was a religious being — deeply impressed with the spirit of faith and worship, even if she lacked the divine intelligence which might have enabled her to discriminate between the holy things of the sanctuary, and those meretricious symbols, and mocking shadows, which the arts of one class, and the fears of another, have decreed for worship, and declared no less holy than the true. The *spirituelle* held a large place in her composition ; and if her imagination lacked the activity of Carl's, her yielding weakness rendered her susceptible to the full influence of his. This weakness increased the activity of a faculty to which it was constantly appealing ; and though the terrible forms and fancies to which the mind of Carl frequently gave birth and performance, only drove the timorous wife more earnestly to her prayerful devotions, she did not seek to discourage him in a practice which had so beneficial an effect. Unconsciously he practised upon her fears, moving her to devoutness through an unseemly influence ; and with equal unconsciousness on her part, her fears stimulated his superstitious tendencies even to error, by giving continual employment to an imagination which daily became more and more morbidly active, and consequently dangerous.

“Herman had now been gone for some months. At first he wrote to them freely and frequently, but after a while his letters grew fewer and less satisfactory, and at length months went by without bringing them any intelligence of their neglectful brother. Matilda sometimes complained of this, and thought unkindly of Herman; but Carl, like a true friend, always found some excuse for his neglect, in the pressure of business, and the accumulation of other duties and friends.

“‘Besides, he need not write, Matilda, when he has nothing particular to say. No news is good news commonly; and when a letter comes, Matilda, you know you always dread to open it, for fear of hearing evil. Herman will not forget us, be sure.’

“‘But he may be sick, Carl.’

“That was always a suggestion which silenced her husband, and he felt doubly unhappy on such occasions, as, in addition to the fear with which such a suggestion seemed to inspire Matilda, there was an unpleasant consciousness in his own mind which dreadfully troubled him. At such times, strive as he might, he could not help thinking upon the promise which Herman had given him, and he felt that, however he might regret the death of his brother-in-law, such an event would be lessened

of much of its evil, if that promise could be kept. Such thoughts he felt were criminal, and to do Carl all justice, we should add, that he strove manfully to resist them. But he could not resist them, and they grew upon him. After a little while, he thought of nothing else. He did not need the gently-uttered fears of Matilda, who continually spoke of her absent brother, to remind him of his promise and of his mortality; and in his dreams the image of that well known friend, stretched out pale, and motionless, in the embrace of death, came but too frequently to his mind, not to lose, in time, many of its terrors.

IX.

“One pleasant afternoon, the two, Carl and Matilda, rambled forth, according to their usual custom, towards the ancient abbey. The sun was just about setting, and he made a glorious descent. His rays streamed through the broken walls by which they walked, and they paused to contemplate the picturesque effect of their scattered beams, gliding among tombs, in which the dust that once was life, and strength, and ambition, could no longer feel their warmth. While they looked,

a cloud suddenly arose in the heavens, obscuring and shutting out the bright glories which had won their gaze, from the shattered walls which they had made golden but a moment before. The sudden clouding of the sky brought an instinctive gloom to their mutual minds, and without seeming to notice the absence of any connexion between the phenomenon upon which they looked, and the object in her thoughts, Matilda quickly remarked :

“ ‘ I hope, Carl, that nothing is the matter with Herman.’

“ Strange to say, the thought that something was the matter with her brother, was even then the busy thought in the mind of Carl. He replied after a moment’s pause—

“ ‘ Indeed, Matilda, I hope not.’

“ A slight laugh rose from the ruins, and the conscious soul of Carl was smitten within him.

“ ‘ Had he been sincere in the utterance of that hope?’ was the question which he asked himself when he heard the laugh ; but it was a question which he dared not answer. Matilda did not seem to have heard the sound which had touched him so deeply ; and he was sufficiently collected to conceal his agitation from her. But while they spoke together, though but a few moments had elapsed, the cloud had veered round, and now

hung in the sky directly before them. Somehow, this appearance affected Carl seriously. He coupled the cloud with his own thoughts, and his imagination grew busy in its contemplation. It did not seem a common cloud to his eyes; and its progress, from a speck in the pathway of the sun, to a mantle, in whose pitchy bosom the dying but glorious orb was to find his splendors utterly subdued, was a marvel to a mind so subtle as his. His fancies grew firm and strengthened when he saw that Matilda observed the wonder also.

“‘That is a strange looking cloud, Carl!’ she exclaimed — ‘see how it rolls — over and over — onward and onward — and yet there is no wind. It is coming towards us.’

“‘The flight of the cloud seemed to have increased in velocity. It neared them rapidly, and was evidently descending. When above them, it seemed to open and to expand, and from its bosom Carl felt the warm drops upon his face.

“‘‘It rains!’ he said, ‘let us go into the abbey.’

“‘I feel none,’ said Matilda.

“‘Indeed! it is full on my cheek!’

“The eyes of Matilda turned from the floating mass that had now passed over them, but when her glance met the face of her husband, she screamed in terror.

“ ‘Father of heaven!’ she exclaimed, ‘be with us! Carl, my husband, your face is covered with blood!’

“ ‘Say not so!’ he cried, ‘what can it mean?’ He wiped his face with his handkerchief, and the stains were visible to his own eyes; and when he looked down upon his garments, they, too, were covered with the same sanguinary color. The wonder was greater still, when they looked in vain to find a drop upon the person of Matilda. Yet her arm had been fast locked within his, and the very hand which had sustained her’s was sprinkled plentifully with the stains.

X.

“They hurried home in consternation. The thought of Matilda was upon her brother; and she regarded the events of the evening as ominous of his fate. But why did the blood stains fall only upon her husband? Why were her garments untouched? This was a mystery to her; but not to Carl. He thought he could explain it, but he forbore to speak. He dared not. His thoughts and feelings were not what they should have been. He was guilty, in his secret soul, of improper feel-

ings, if not of improper wishes, and he knew it. Supper was soon served, and, like a good wife, regardful only of her husband, Matilda urged Carl to eat, for she beheld his abstractedness. He ate without knowing that he did so. She, however, could eat nothing, and as soon as the repast was over, she retired for the night. But Carl felt that there was no sleep for him; and a feverish mood, for which he could not account, prompted him to sally forth. He would have gone to his wife's chamber—he tried to do so—for he knew what were her apprehensions, and he wished to soothe them—but he could not. Something impelled his footsteps abroad—a spirit beyond his own drove him forward; and with a desperate mind he rapidly hastened to the abbey, as if there, and there only, he should find a solution of the marvel which had distressed him. His heart seemed to grow strong in proportion as his thoughts grew wilful; and without any of those tremors which had ever before possessed him when he rambled, with a purely mental and not a personal feeling, among the ruins, he boldly plunged into their recesses.

“The night was a clear, but not a bright one. The stars were not numerous, but they were unclouded. The air was still, and was only now

and then apparent in a slight breathing, as it came through some little crevices in the wall. The silence of the place was complete—was its solitude complete also? Carl asked of himself the question, as he walked beneath the massive archway of the fabric—still solid and strong, though broken and impending; for, the masons of old, wrought, not less to make their works live than to live themselves. They live, like all good workmen, in their labors. The roof, broken in many places, let in the scattered starlight, and sufficiently, though imperfectly, revealed to him the place. He went forward, full of sad and truant thoughts. He took his seat upon one end of a dilapidated stone which had often sustained him before. His elbows rested upon his knees, and his hands supported his head. It was in this posture that he mused with feelings which sometimes brought him back to impulses and a course of reflection not unworthy of his better nature. They reproached him with the heartlessness of his curiosity, as if it were not the tendency of mind always—great mind, which overlooks the time, and lives for God, and for the species—to disregard nice affections, and the tender blossoms which decay.

“‘Herman, Herman!’ he exclaimed, ‘I have been unworthy of thee. Thou hast loved me with the love of a brother, while I have thought

of thee even as the ancient augur of the victim, which he slaughtered for unholy wisdom ! I have prayed in my secret soul—I have prayed for thy death—that I might have improper knowledge.’

“Again did a slight laugh come to his ears. He looked up with a shudder. A small blue light crawled along upon the opposite wall, like some alimy reptile, and while Carl watched its progress with solemn interest, the laugh was repeated almost beside him. He started, and almost at the same moment he felt one side of him grow chill. A breath of ice seemed to penetrate him from the east. He turned his eyes in that quarter, and the spectacle that then met his gaze paralyzed every faculty of his body. The form of Herman Ottfried was there, sitting beside him on the other end of the grave stone. He could not speak—he could not move. His eyes were riveted upon the spectre, and the glare which was sent back from those of the unearthly visitant, was that of hell. A scornful leer was in it—a giggling hate—a venomous but laughing malice.

“‘Her—Her—Herman!’ Carl tried to speak, but a monosyllable was all that he could utter.

“‘Ha, ha, ha!’ The vaulted abbey rang with the echoes of that infernal laugh.

“‘Mercy! mercy!’ screamed the unhappy Carl, as he lifted his hands and strove to close his

eyes against the dreadful presence. But the elbows refused to bend—he could not raise them. His knees in the mean time gave way, and he sank senselessly upon the damp ground of the abbey.

XI.

“When he unclosed his eyes, which he did in the fullest consciousness of his situation, and consequently in the extremest terror, he was rejoiced to find himself alone. The grave stone, at the foot of which he lay, was untenanted. The abbey was silent, and though he dreaded, at every step which he took while making his way out, to hear the dreadful laugh, and to behold the hellish visage, he yet suffered no farther interruption while in the abbey. When he had left it, however, and was about to enter the main street of the village, he was encountered by a drunken man.

“‘Hallo, friend!’ exclaimed the bacchanal, ‘whither so fast? Stop and hear a song—stop and be merry.’

“And, in the voice of one satisfied with himself and all the world, the drinker carolled with tolerable skill, one of those famous dithyrambics in which the German muse has frequently excel-

led. The eye of the unhappy Carl was turned, half in hope, and half in despair, upon the man. He had heard of the soporific effects of wine—of its ability to drown care, and produce a sweet forgetfulness of his sorrow, and he felt inclined to the temptation ; but a sudden thought of Matilda shot through his brain, at that lucky instant, like an arrow. He knew not the lateness of the hour, and was ignorant how long he had been from her. He knew that he had swooned away, and knew not how long he had remained in his stupor. It might be near daylight, and what, —if such were the case, —what must be her fears? Domestic love came to his succor, and he rejected the overtures of the bacchanalian, who nevertheless continued to pursue him. He followed the unhappy Carl to his very door, now persuading, and now striving to provoke him by every manner of taunt and sarcasm, to partake of the intoxicating cup which he proffered. But the sufferer was firm, though more than once it came to his thought that wine was good against sorrow. He was not yet so deficient, however, in other resources, as to fly to this doubtful succedaneum.

XII.

“It was not so late as Carl had fancied it, and his wife was still awake. He had not been away much longer than was his wont, when he went forth on his usual evening rambles ; and though she had suffered from his absence, yet it was not through any apprehensions for his safety. Still she had no complaints, and the pleasure in her eyes when he did return, was, probably, one of the best arguments against his wandering forth again. She was still melancholy and apprehensive, and when she observed the anguish, not to say the agony, which was apparent in every feature of his face, her apprehensions underwent a corresponding increase.

“ ‘What is the matter, Carl ? What has troubled you ?’ she demanded of him in agitated accents.

“ ‘Nothing, nothing !’ with an effort, he made out to reply.

“ ‘It is something—something terrible, dearest husband—your cheeks are haggard, your eyes are wild—you tremble all over. Tell me, tell me, my husband, what is it that troubles you.’

“‘Nothing,’ he again replied—‘return to your bed,’ (she had risen when she beheld his face,) ‘return to your bed and heed me not. I will be better soon.’

“He quieted, if he did not satisfy her. She returned to the couch as he bade her; and he prepared to follow her. But there was one duty which he omitted that night, which, from his childhood, he had never neglected to perform before. He did not pray. He strove to do so, but his mind could not be brought to address itself in supplication. He forgot the words; and others, foreign to his object, took their places. He gave up the effort in despair. He could think of nothing but the terrible laugh, and the demoniac visage which had met him in the abbey. All the next day he was like one whose senses wandered. His wife strove to soothe his mood, which was fitful—and to attract his attention, which strayed continually; but he smiled upon her kindly, with a sickly smile, and gave no farther acknowledgment. As night approached he grew visibly agitated, and as he became conscious that his efforts at concealment were unavailing, he sought his chamber, to hide in its dimness what he might not otherwise conceal. But his agony seemed to increase with his solitude. Dreadful images were about him in his

chamber, and a chuckle, like that he had heard in the abbey, was uttered, at intervals, even over his shoulder. He descended to the apartment in which he had left Matilda, preferring that she should see the agony that he could not endure alone. But her presence gave him no consolation, and her solicitude became an annoyance.

“ ‘Trouble me no more!’ he exclaimed, in tones which she had never heard from his lips before, replying to one of her fond appeals to know the cause of his sufferings. ‘Trouble me no more—it is nothing—nothing which I may tell you.’

“She turned from him in sorrow not less deep, though less acute than his, and the tears filled her eyes. His heart reproached him as he beheld her action, and readily conceived her pain; but there was a wilful impulse in his bosom, which refused to permit of his making the usual atonement. Sullen and sad, he glowered about the apartment ’till night came on, and supper was announced, when Matilda saw that his agitation was visibly increasing. With the meek and blessing spirit of an angel, forgetting the harsh rebuff which he had given her, she approached him—threw her fond arms about his neck, and implored him to smile again upon her. He tried to do so but the effort produced only a ghastly grin, no

less shocking to her eyes than the effort had been irksome to his mind. He went to the supper table, and, unobserved by him, her glance watched him while he strove to eat. He left the table in horror, for the face of Herman stared at him from the plate. There was no hope of escape from the pursuing fiend, and the unhappy Carl rushed out of the house. Where should he go?

“ ‘To the abbey! to the abbey! I will speak—I will demand its meaning. I will know and hear all. If it be Herman, in truth—my brother and my friend—’

“ ‘Ha! ha! ha!’

“The infernal laugh was at his elbow. He turned in desperation to behold—not the gorgon stare which had so terrified him in the abbey, but a face rather good natured than otherwise—the face of the bacchanalian who had encountered him on the preceding night. A mischievous grin was upon the features of the stranger, whose broad mouth and little twinkling eyes, with the fat, hanging cheek, and the red and pimpled nose, seemed the very personification of fun and frolic. Not a feature in his face appeared of demoniac origin. The subtle malignity of the satanic attributes were entirely wanting, and in place of them, reckless mirth, indifferent to all matters but good cheer, was the

prevailing expression. But the laugh! That, certainly, had been very like the laugh he had heard in the abbey. No two sounds could have seemed more alike to the ears of Carl. A new thought entered his mind with this conviction. This drunken fellow might have been the proprietor of the former laugh, as he certainly was of that which he had just heard. To him might be ascribed the design to frighten himself and Herman. When he looked into the cunning, merry, blubber-face of the reveller, conjecture became conviction. 'It must be so!' said Carl, half aloud.

" 'To be sure it must,' exclaimed the other. 'We will have a glass together now, though you did refuse to be a good fellow last night. Come. Here's old Dietrich hard by. I can answer for his liquors, though I cannot for his conscience. I believe in the one, and — damn the other. Come, my friend, let's try him.'

" Carl was half disposed to be civil with the stranger. The notion which had suddenly possessed him that he and the ghost of the abbey were one and the same person, brought a singular relief to his mind; and he was half persuaded to forgive him the impertinence of the fright which he had received, in consideration of the solution of the mystery which the conjecture brought. The

stranger pressed him, expatiating upon the sweets of wine, and the luxury of good company.

“ ‘Wine,’ says he—‘wine, Carl——’

“ ‘How the devil does he know my name!’ thought Carl to himself, but he did not say it.

“ ‘Damn my instinct,’ said the other—‘I find it the hardest thing in the world not to know, what, indeed, it is not necessary that I should know.’

“ ‘What do you mean?’ said Carl.

“ ‘Oh, nothing—I was only regretting that my passion for wine—I had almost thought it an instinct—should sometimes make me indifferent to the sort of company I fall in with. Here, I’ve been on the eve of eulogizing the rich Hochheimer to you, who are a judge, doubtless, of the noble beverage, simply because, in my intercourse with mankind, I meet hourly with so many to whom the eulogy is a sort of key to their tastes, that it is now almost habitual with me to dwell upon it. To you, however, any idle talk upon the merits and effects of good wine would be only an impertinence.’

“ ‘I am no judge—I drink little,’ said Carl, to whom the seduction of appearing more than he was, or of knowing more than he did, had always been a very small one.

“ ‘You belie yourself,’ said the stranger — ‘I know that you are a judge — I see it in your face. Come with me — you shall give me your opinion of the wine of Dietrich.’

“ ‘Nay, you must excuse me,’ said Carl.

“ ‘Can’t — never excuse a man from his wine,’ said the other, bluntly. ‘Excuse a milk-sop, of course — but never a man.’ And as he finished a sarcasm which has led thousands of goodly young men to their ruin, he familiarly took the arm of Carl to lead him forward to the tavern. But Carl was not vain of being esteemed manly in this respect. His philosophy was that of an English poet, whom he never read :

‘Who drinks more wine than others can,
I count a hogshead, not a man —’

and he gently, but firmly refused.

“ ‘Why, man,’ said the other, ‘Am I then mistaken in you. I thought you a good fellow, who loved good company, good wine, and a good story —’

“ ‘Good story !’ exclaimed Carl, touched in the right place.

“ ‘Ay, a good story — a tale of the mountains — of the miners, and the red demons of the mines — the gnomes and the salamanders.’

“ ‘Have you, indeed, such stories?’ inquired Carl, now rather curious.

“ ‘Ay, that have I, and, nearer home, of the old abbey here. I can tell you a ghost story of those ruins, that ’ll make every hair of your head stand on end.’

“ Carl hesitated and lingered, and his companion laughed at his hesitation. That laugh chilled him—it reminded him of what he had been willing to forget. It reminded him of the face of Herman—the ghastly grin upon his lips, and the dreadful laugh—so like to that of the stranger, which he had then heard. He broke away from the arm which held him.

“ ‘Not now,’ said he, ‘you must excuse me. I have business to attend to.’ And with these words, amid the curses and the derision of his companion, he hurried forward to the abbey.

XIII.

“ A spell, whose power seemed to be irresistible, prompted him in the direction which he took. A will, superior to his own, yet compassing and controlling it entirely, drove him onward to the abbey. What proper motive had he there? None.

His duties were all elsewhere — with his wife — in his own home. What could he gain to see once more the dreadful spectre which had affrighted him? An unholy curiosity stimulated the answer to this question. Knowledge — Knowledge. To know that which is forbidden — to win the secrets of two worlds — was the hope of Carl, as it has been the unwise hope of thousands. He did not remember, while he indulged this vain desire, that the ‘tree of knowledge, is not that of life;’ still less can it be said to be that of happiness. Thought is not often happiness; and where thought takes the wings of the imagination, and strives ever after the ideal, it is too apt to be torture and strife, as it must finally be death. Death, indeed — death and time are the grand illuminators. To wait is to be wise. Alas! for Carl — he had not only to wait but to endure.

“ ‘I must pluck up courage!’ he mentally exclaimed. ‘I demanded to see him; I must not shrink from the encounter. Let him speak to me — let him say he is happy — and I will ask no more.’

“ ‘What right had he to ask so much? Were it his right, would it not be revealed? Would the just God withhold from him a right? He did not ask himself these questions, for Carl, like all of his species, was but too apt to contemplate, through

the medium of a shallow vanity, the deity in his own heart, as if the dwelling-place of fears and feebleness, of vain caprices and false-founded passions, could ever be the home of divinity.

“He entered the abbey walls—he trod among the crumbling ruins, but his heart shook within him. Again he sat upon the tomb-stone—again did the sudden and sinuous light crawl before him upon the walls. He felt the chill enter and curdle the blood within his bosom, and he knew that the spectre was sitting at his side. He dared not look round upon him. He almost sank upon the ground; but the resolve of his mind sustained him, and he tried to compose himself.

“ ‘Why should I fear?’ he said in his thoughts. ‘If it be Herman, he will not harm me—if it be not Herman, what other has claim upon me!’

“As if the spectre had seen his heart, and in this manner commented upon its fears and weakness, the dreadful laugh which had so shocked him before, was again repeated. The blood ran cold in the bosom of the mortal, but his firmness had not departed. The resolve was still in his mind, and after a brief pause, in which he struggled successfully with his terrors, he turned his eye boldly to behold the spectre. The same dreadful presence met his glance as on the preceding night. But the

novelty had passed away, and with it some of the terrors. He felt that he could now survey it, distinctly, resolutely, if not calmly. He did survey it—and what a spectacle! The face was that of his friend, that of Herman Ottfried, indeed; but, oh! how different. It was the face of his brother and his friend, but in place of the gentleness and good nature that made its prevailing expression heretofore, the features were all hell-stamped—the skin was all hell-dyed and darkened. Carl nearly fainted—his heart seemed to wither within him as he gazed. But he continued to gaze. His resolve, built upon high, but erring, moral purpose—was not now to be shaken. Nor, indeed, could he do otherwise than gaze. The eyes of the spectre, like those of the fabled basilisk, rivetted his own. The glare which shot from them, like a yellow vapor, seemed to exercise upon him the power of a spell. He gazed till he was infatuated; yet he writhed all the while beneath the scornful malignity of the spectre's glance.

“‘What would you with me?’ he screamed, rather than spoke. He could easier scream than speak; and the words were scarcely intelligible to his own ears. He was once more answered by that infernal laugh. He shivered as he heard it, but it did not increase his terrors. It rather made him indignant.

“ ‘Who are you?’ he cried, in tones more temperate, and with a spirit even more resolved than before. ‘Who are you?—what are you? I know you not.’

“ ‘Herman—thy friend—he for whose death thou pray’dst, that thou might’st possess his secret. Would’st thou not hear it?’

“ Such was the terrifying response of the spectre whom he had summoned.

“ ‘Thou liest!’ cried Carl, boldly. ‘I uttered no such prayer.’

“ ‘Thou did’st,’ was the prompt reply, ‘in thy heart thou did’st, and thy prayer is granted. Herman Ottfried is no more—he is beside thee.’

“ ‘I believe thee not!’ was the courageous reply. ‘My friend still lives; and if he did not, I would not believe that such as thou seemest, and art, should be his representative. He is good, and thou—’

“ ‘Art damned!—thou would’st say!’ and the spectre concluded his sentence—‘And thou say’st truly, Carl Werner. I am as thou say’st. Yet, look once more upon these features, and, blasted and blackened as they appear to thee, say if they are not those of him who was thy friend—of him who was Herman Ottfried.’

“ ‘I believe thee not!’ cried Carl, trembling all over.

“ ‘Thou shalt—thou dost believe me, Carl Werner,’ replied the spectre, ‘Thou know’st that I am he. Did I not pledge myself to meet thee—to tell thee all—to give thee intelligence—to ease thy curiosity? I am come. I am ready. Art thou willing—art thou prepared to hear?’

“ ‘Not from thee—not from thee!’ cried Carl, in agony. ‘Away! leave me—trouble me not with thy falsehoods. My friend is living—Herman Ottfried, I know, still lives; and if he did not, thou never couldst have been the spirit which filled his frame, and gave impulse to his actions. He had no malice such as glares from thine eyes—he had no foul passions such as hang about thy lips.’

“ ‘Thou reasonest like a child, Carl Werner. Hear me and believe. The first truth is death—the second judgment. Mortality is a state of dreams and shows—presentments which impose only on mortal senses. We throw off all disguises for the first time, when we arrive at the first truth, which we never know until death. We acquire all truth when we reach the higher form of judgment. In death, we know for the first time what we are and have been—in judgment, we know what we shall be.’

“ ‘Then thou canst tell me nothing,’ said Carl, fearlessly—yet trembling all the while.

“ ‘Yes—I can tell thee what I am!’ exclaimed the spectre in reply; but it needed no words to unfold that which was but too clearly discernible in the blasted and blasting expression of his countenance as he thus replied. Carl saw this expression, and the shudder that shook his frame sufficiently apprized the spectre that it was unnecessary for him to relate that which the quick imagination of Carl so readily conceived. He grinned fearfully as he witnessed the tremblings of his mortal companion, and the malicious and hateful expression re-aroused the courage of the youth.

“ ‘Yet, though I cannot but see that thou art one of the damned and blasted of heaven—one of the thrice-blasted perchance ——.’

“ ‘Thou art right!’ exclaimed the spectre, while lurid fires of a hellish agony seemed to kindle in, and to dart forth from his eye—‘thou art right; I am indeed, one of the thrice—ay, one of the seventy times seventy times damned of the Eternal; and I defy him amid all his fires.’

“He paused as he spoke these words, and his clenched hands were lifted in air, and thrust upwards, as if he would do battle even at that moment with the deity. Carl shuddered and shrunk from the fearful presence; but his soul grew

strengthened within him in due proportion to the revoltings which he felt at such foul blasphemy.

"I believe thee!" he exclaimed, and his own clasped hands were raised in prayer while he continued—'I believe thee; but I believe not that thou art Herman Ottfried—it is impossible—I believe not that he is dead.'

"'Thou shalt have confirmation to-morrow. His blood was upon thee yesterday—his shadow is before thee now. Dost thou not believe me—wilt not thou hear some of the secrets which thou didst once so desire to know. Where is thy curiosity—where is thy thirst, Carl, after knowledge? Has thy marriage changed thy nature, and art thou willing to be the mere cur of the household, and forego that noble ambition which made thee seek after wisdom, as if it were life—as if it were more than life to thee—as if it were happiness? Is it happiness to thee no longer? Is thy sense dulled for its enjoyment? Go to, Carl, I had not thought this of thee. Go to thy wife—get from her the needle and the net-work, and find in her example thy fitting employment. Thou hast not the soul for my secret—thou wouldst fear to hear it.'


"'Fiend—foul fiend, and bitter devil!' cried the fierce Carl, provoked by the taunting of the

spectre beside him — ‘I fear thee not, though I would not have thy secret. I hold thee to be a cheat, and thou but slanderest the noble spirit of my friend. Have at thy throat, monster, in the name of heaven and its blessed ministers. Have at thy throat! and let the great God of the heavens and the earth determine between us.’

“‘Ha, ha, ha!’ was the only response of the spectre as Carl uttered these words. The replication of the crumbling walls to the infernal laugh was tremendous; but it did not shake the desperate courage of Carl Werner. He sprang upon his glowering and grinning enemy, with outstretched arms and fingers, and he aimed to clutch the fearful image — not a whit alarmed at the increasing fiendishness of its aspect — by the throat; but the object melted in his embrace, at the moment when it seemed most secure. His arms grasped his own body; and, stunned with confused thoughts and defeated passion, the unhappy Carl gazed around him in a stupor, which was not at all diminished as he found himself alone.

XIV.

“To a certain extent, this stupor brought with it a desirable insensibility. He trembled no longer.



He was almost reckless. A reaction in his mind had taken place, and from having been one whom every thing before, however slight, could startle, he was now one whom nothing could affect or move. He rushed through the abbey. He thrust his fearless head into all its recesses—into tombs and niches, cells, and ruinous and long untrodden apartments, with most admirable indiscretion. He summoned his tormentor from the places in which he had hidden himself, and defied the presence which he invoked. But all was silent; and, exhausted with fatigue, and chafed with his disappointment, Carl at length departed from the abbey in hopeless despondency. The next day, even as the spectre had predicted, he received the fatal intelligence of the death of Herman. This news was but too confirmatory of what he had seen and felt. It gave life and body to his fears. The grief of Matilda was great, but it would be vain to undertake to describe that of her husband. To her, his agony—dearly, as she well knew, he loved her brother—seemed strange and unaccountable. She little dreamed of the nightly revelations which were made to his senses. With a praiseworthy sense of propriety and a manly tenderness, he had carefully withheld from her, though still longing

to reveal, the fearful secret which he possessed. But how could he say to her that he had seen her brother, or seen him as he was—a thing upon whom the curse of God had fallen, and who had been delivered over by his judgment to the awful ministers of eternal wrath. He felt that he must keep his secret, and bear with its horrible burden as best he might. But, as evening drew nigh, the horrors of his heart grew less and less supportable. He felt that he must again perform his vigil. He must again repair to the place of his trial and his torture; and this, by a secret conviction of his mind, he felt must be done, until he had courage to hear, and was willing to believe, all the horrible intelligence which the spectre might think proper to convey. He had bound himself solemnly to the meeting, and he could not shrink from the terms of his pledge. Yet, where and when was it to end? This was the dreadful question which his soul answered in utter hopelessness.

“ ‘In my death. Yet it will end soon, for I cannot stand this strife much longer.’ ”

“Such were his thoughts and words; and their truth would readily be believed by those who were conscious of the sudden and singular change which had taken place in his person. All the villagers remarked it. He was haggard and listless—he

saw and heeded nobody—he moved through the streets like a ghost, and Matilda—the beloved wife of his affections—no longer filled his heart, and commanded the devotion of his eye. She strove to find out the secret of his sorrows, and to soothe them. But vainly would the physician seek to heal, while he remains ignorant of the cause of the distemper. We must lay bare the wound to extract the poison; and in the purity of her soul she did not even imagine the horrible nature of that secret which was preying upon his. Her efforts were in vain. Night came on, and though she strove to keep him at home, the spell was too powerful to permit her to succeed.

“ ‘Where is it you go, dearest Carl? Why, night after night, will you go forth in so much sorrow, and with features so wild, so full of apprehension; and when you return—so full of horror—so haggard—so dreadful? Tell me, dear husband, whither it is you go, and why it is you suffer in this manner.’

“ ‘Nay, do not heed me, dearest,’ said the unhappy man, with a gentleness of manner which made his sorrows only the more touching—‘do not trouble yourself about me. I have busy and vexing thoughts, and shall not look well until they are

to reveal, the fearful secret which he possessed. But how could he say to her that he had seen her brother, or seen him as he was—a thing upon whom the curse of God had fallen, and who had been delivered over by his judgment to the awful ministers of eternal wrath. He felt that he must keep his secret, and bear with its horrible burden as best he might. But, as evening drew nigh, the horrors of his heart grew less and less supportable. He felt that he must again perform his vigil. He must again repair to the place of his trial and his torture ; and this, by a secret conviction of his mind, he felt must be done, until he had courage to hear, and was willing to believe, all the horrible intelligence which the spectre might think proper to convey. He had bound himself solemnly to the meeting, and he could not shrink from the terms of his pledge. Yet, where and when was it to end ? This was the dreadful question which his soul answered in utter hopelessness.

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digested into form. When I resolve them, then will I remain with you, and be at peace.'

" 'What thoughts are they?' she demanded; but he smiled, and answered her evasively.

" 'Ask me not — not now,' he replied, and resisting her solicitations to be allowed to go forth with him, he rushed out of the house. She followed him to the door, and looked after him in the street; and her own apprehensions were greatly increased as she beheld the erratic impulse of his movement, and the feebleness of his step — the one betokening the disorder of his mind, the other the debility of his body. While she looked and trembled, with the big tear gathering slowly in her eye and stealing silently to her cheek, the accents of a mild but strange voice met her ears at a small distance, and, turning, she beheld an old man standing before her. He was a stranger to her, and evidently a stranger in the place, since his air and costume were very different from any that she had ever before seen. His beard was long and white like silver, and hung down neatly smooth and clean upon his bosom; his hair, equally long, and not less white, streamed with similar smoothness down his back and shoulders. It was evident that he was a person of very great age, yet his skin was clear, of a pure white and red, and unmarked

by a single wrinkle. His mouth was small, and wore a sweet expression, and his eyes were full of benevolence. He carried a little staff, and a bundle which probably contained a single change of raiment—it certainly could not have held more; and he seemed like some venerable traveller, who had an unconquerable desire for travel, and had learned to narrow his wants to the smallest possible limits, consistent with the superior claims of an intellectual nature.

“‘Daughter,’ he said, ‘Peace be with you. Can you give me shelter and food for the night? I am a stranger, and would abide with you.’

“The heart of Matilda, like that of Carl, was open as day, and the stranger most probably had seen in her countenance that he would not be refused; for, even as he spoke, he prepared to enter. He was not deceived in the person he addressed. With a sweet voice, full of respect—for his venerable white hairs had impressed Matilda with a proper and gentle awe—she bade him welcome, and having closed the door—after giving a long lingering look to the form of her husband, who was rapidly passing from her sight—she led the way for her aged guest, into an inner apartment. There she spread before him the simple repast from which the unhappy Carl had fled. The old

man blessed the bread ere he broke it, and blessed the giver. He then ate heartily, and at intervals conversed with Matilda, who sat with him at the table, though she ate nothing. Her heart was too full of doubt and sorrow to suffer her to eat, and while her guest spoke, the tears gathered unbidden, and without her consciousness, to her eyes. He saw them.

“Daughter, you weep—you are unhappy. Why is it—what is your sorrow?”

“Alas! father, are we not born to sorrows. Is there one who escapes?”

“True, my child—sorrow is human, and to grieve is the attribute of man, and perhaps his blessing. They are blest who can weep. God loveth those whom he chasteneth; for it is through trial only that we gain virtue, and through virtue only that we gain heaven. The untried are the unblessed, for then is the work harder for them, and the prospect of virtue more remote. Such, my daughter, is not your case. The fire even now is purifying you, and if you grieve, you do not murmur. Sorrow, like a goodly medicine that is to work for our healing, must be submitted to without murmuring. Whence come your sorrows, my daughter—let me know them. I have travelled much among men, and I know many of the

arts of healing. I have some skill which I may boast, in curing those hurts of the mind which come from our indiscretions, and are to be healed by our humility. Let me know what grieves you, and bear to my counsel."

" 'I grieve not for myself, my father, so much as for one that I love—my husband.'

" 'You are married then?'

" 'I am, and to one of the best of men ; but he is thoughtful even to sadness, and I fear that his thoughts are sometimes too vexing for his mind, which they very much disorder. Something troubles him very greatly even now, and before you came he went forth in deep anxiety, which it was painful to me to behold. He will be away until near midnight, or even after ; and when he returns, it will seem that some dreadful strife hath shaken him—his face will be pale as if with sudden fright—his eyes wild, staring, almost starting from their sockets, and his whole appearance that of a man almost distraught.'

" 'And how long hath he been troubled in this wise, my daughter?' demanded the aged stranger.

" 'But a few days,' Matilda readily replied ; for there was something so encouraging in the appearance of the old man, that, although a woman rather disposed to reserve in her manners, she felt

that she could have freely told him every secret of her bosom.

“ ‘But a few days—and before this time, he hath shown none of these habits?’

“ ‘None, father—none of this wildness and affliction. He hath been thoughtful ever, and fond of sad thoughts,—but he hath never been wild and stern as he is now, and never did he go abroad in this fashion after the night.’

“ ‘You tell me of one,’ said the stranger, after a brief pause given to thought—‘You tell me of one who hath done a sudden wrong, and whom a just conscience is smiting sorely; or, one, perchance, who is fond of his error, or, from a false and unseemly pride, who persisteth in it.’

“ ‘Oh, no, father—I cannot think it. Carl would never wrong human being. He is the most just and honorable of our village—that everybody says of him.’

“ ‘That may be, my daughter, but is there no wronging of God and of one’s self—which is also a wronging of God, as it perverts the service of the creature from the place and power to which it is due. Can you tell me that Carl Werner has not done this.’

“ Matilda tried to think, before she answered, whether she had mentioned her husband’s name.

She did not recollect having done so, and yet the old man had pronounced it. Before she could resolve this thought or reply, the stranger continued :

“ ‘ It is always a bad sign to see one, on a sudden, depart from a good habit, my daughter. You say that your husband seldom or never went forth at night, but always preferred to remain at home, until now.’ ”

“ ‘ Yes, father, — but it is with evident reluctance that he now leaves me. It is like tearing himself away that he rushes out of the house, soon after nightfall, and goes off I know not where.’ ”

“ ‘ To return miserable,’ said the old man. ‘ To bring him back to an old habit, my daughter, is probably to give him the peace of mind which you say he seems to lack. Have you striven to keep him at home, my daughter, since you have seen the evil of this habit ?’ ”

“ ‘ I have, my father, but without success,’ was the reply.

“ ‘ You must do it,’ said the old man with vehemence — ‘ you must do it. A good wife, who loves her husband, and is beloved by him, has a thousand sweet arts of persuasion which will not fail to procure from him her wishes. Your husband loves you.’ ”

“ ‘ Of a truth, I think it.’ ”

“ ‘Then, my daughter, if you love him, you shall not fail to persuade him, if you seek to do it. You must keep him at home. He must not go abroad. These nightly wanderings make his infirmity. They prove that he is subject to some evil influence, which thus exacts his obedience, and imposes upon him this form of service. You, and you alone, can save him; for, as the evil influence strives through the powers of hate, it can only be safely contended with by the powers of love. This is the war which is ever going on between the two great principles by which the world is divided. You must prove that the principle of love in your bosom is stronger than that of hate in the enemy of your husband. Can you prove this, my daughter; for, unless you can, Carl Werner is lost to you forever, as he certainly will soon be lost to himself.’

“ ‘I can—I will!’ cried the devoted wife, with terror and love both equally mingled in her countenance; for the words of the venerable old man had deeply impressed her, and a something in his air and manner assured her that he was worthy of all confidence.

“ ‘I can—I will, my father—only tell me what I shall do—how work—what say.’

“ ‘Love needs no counsellor, my daughter, for

it is God's nature, and is by instinct wise. True love, I speak of; and not the idle fancies which the profligate and vain have misnamed love. If you love Carl Werner with a true wife's love, you will seek that he should be always with you—you will seek to make him happy. These are your present tasks. You must begin by keeping him from this wandering habit. He must not go forth again at night—for he flies from the principle of love, to pay homage to the principle of hate. Withdraw him from that foul worship, and he is safe, and you are both happy.'

"It would be needless to dwell upon, or to detail, the farther dialogue which then took place between the young wife and her venerable guest. It is sufficient to say that the longer she listened to his counsel, the more she became impressed with its force, and with the necessity for its adoption. While she heard him she had no wish for sleep, and hours seemed to pass away like minutes until the clock struck the midnight hour, and she then grew more than ever alarmed at the absence of her husband. She was desirous of putting into use and exercise the advice which the old man had given her, and would have sallied forth, even then, to look after him, when the stranger dissuaded her from it.

“‘Do you remain,’ he said, ‘while I go forth and seek him.’

“‘You!’—she said—‘no, father, you are too old and feeble, and your limbs are weary with the long day’s travel.’

“He rose, as she spoke these words, and as he moved over the floor, she was answered. Where had those aged limbs acquired that strength and elasticity which they now exhibited?

“‘But you know not where to seek him, my father.’

“He smiled; and she did not doubt, when she beheld that smile, that the aged man knew better where to find her husband than she did herself. He paused as he crossed the threshold, and bidding her be of good cheer, he blessed the house and departed.

XV.

“Meanwhile, what of Carl Werner? With a fearful instinct he proceeded, upon leaving his dwelling, to the place of meeting with the spectre. Vainly did he strive against the fascination which impelled him to seek the abbey. Why should he so wilfully seek that which was so full of torture?

He had now no wish to hear the revelations of the dead—he had no thought, certainly, to profit by them, when brought by one whose very presence was so terrific; still less did he desire to owe his knowledge to a source so foul and fearful. These were his thoughts, nor his thoughts merely. These were his frequent resolves throughout the day. ‘I will not go to-night,’ his lips muttered at all hours; yet, with the coming of evening, his good resolutions failed him. A power which he strove vainly to resist, drove him onward; and like the criminal, reluctant yet compelled, he appeared regularly at the appointed hour at the summons of his tyrant. Carl felt that there was a judgment in all this. He felt that it was a decree of heaven against him for the unholy feelings and desires of his heart. Yet, where, and when, and how, was this to end? He dared not think! His knees trembled beneath him as he put this question to himself, and felt, with the increasing weakness and misery of every moment, that it could end only in his death.

“This conviction was despair. Despair has its strength, but it is the strength accorded by a demon at a fearful price. The price was hope and peace—the penalty was the loss of two lives—the life of the present, and the life to come. Carl

felt that they were already gone, and all his thoughts were now given to the demon. The principle of hate grew active in his fears, and the principle of love grew feebler and feebler, in the continual decay of his hopes. The strife was not only against Carl Warner, but it was against the sweet young wife of his bosom. He felt it to be so, himself, as he found himself continually laboring not to think of her.

“ We need not say, that in the abbey that night, the same hour of torture was passed by Carl, in company with the demon, as before. The belief that his friend was the victim and the slave of hell, sent forth by the infernal monarch to perform a duty which he dared not disobey, was the racking conviction to Carl. Vainly he demanded of the spectre to disavow the features he had assumed. His prayer was idle. Would the principle of hate yield up his chief vantage ground? As well might he implore indulgence from that power, whose only office is punishment. He raved to the demon—defied his malice, and vainly flattered himself that the passion which he showed to his tormentor, was, in reality, a re-assertion of his virtue. Thus do men hourly chain themselves with their own sophisms. The very tumult in his soul, and the violence of his lips, as they sprang from a

feeling of hostility, were, in truth, only so many tributes to the principle of hate. The fearless calm, the gentle earnestness of love, were not in his heart. It was rather a place of fears and strife; and every moment of his paroxysm, increased the number of avenues through which sin might enter and perpetuate its sway. The conflict nearly destroyed the mortal. Almost exhausted, Carl rushed from the ruins; and, this time, he left the demon squat upon the tomb-stone, where he had sat all the time of their conference, glowing and grinning at the agony, and yelling forth his dreadful laughter, as he beheld the flight of the victim.

XVI.

“Carl was not permitted to reach his home in peace. A group of revellers stood in his path as he was about to enter the village. They danced and sang at his approach, and soon gathered around him with tumultuous cries. They sang in his ears the praises of revelry, and invited him to join them.

“‘Be not churlish, brother,’ was the cry — ‘why cherish care? why mate with sorrow? why deny thyself to live? The wine, the wine, boys,

and here's health and a fresh heart to our new companion.'

"Carl envied them their felicity ; and their language, for the first time in his life, seemed sweet in his ears. Hitherto, he had led the life of an abstemious and wholly studious youth, rejecting utterly those noisy and spendthrift pleasures which are so apt to lead astray the young. He began to think that he had erred in his practice, and had been guilty of injustice to a class of persons who were a great deal wiser than himself. The torments which he had just undergone, prepared him for this way of thinking. He hesitated, murmured, looked vacantly around him, and they took him gently by the arm, and renewed their solicitations. Among the foremost of these, he now recognized the bacchanalian who had before assailed him. But he was not intoxicated on this occasion ; and while he spoke with the words and warmth of a boon companion, his language was carefully chosen and gently insinuating. Carl began to yield ; his eyes were already turned in longing upon the tavern—his feet were at the guidance of the individual we have just spoken of—in his thought, the indulgence of wine began to assume the appearance of a leading and necessary object : and in another moment the powers of

evil would have made large strides towards the possession of their victim, when another hand pressed the arm of Carl Werner, and a gentle, but strange voice, in his ears pronounced the name of his wife.

“‘Matilda—she waits you, Carl—she suffers at your long absence. Will you not go to her?’

“The old man whom we have seen setting forth from the house of the wife in search of the husband, stood at his elbow. He had come in time. His words operated like magic, and Carl broke away from his conductors.

“‘Matilda—my wife—my poor wife!’ he exclaimed—‘Yes—let me go to her.’

If the words of the aged man were so quick and powerful to move Carl Werner, his presence seemed to have no less an effect upon those who sought to lead the youth astray. They shrank away from the stranger with hisses, and though reviling him, they still fled. Carl was surprised at this, and the more surprised and horror-stricken when he distinguished among the howls and hisses of the flying crew, the horrible laugh which had so much haunted him before. The old man took no heed of their clamor, but composedly conversed with Carl while they proceeded to the lodgings of the latter, with all the calmness and

ease of one whom a confidence of superiority keeps from anger towards an inferior, as certainly as it protects from harm.

XVII.

“Carl felt better and happier in the embraces of his wife when he reached home, than he had felt for some days before. The principle of love was reviving within him. The conversation of their aged guest contributed largely to this improvement. They could not but acknowledge the influence which they could not but feel. Yet he could scarcely be said to converse. His words seemed so many laws settling doubts and silencing controversy. He spoke from authority — from an authority, seemingly, even beyond that of strong common sense and great experience. Carl was surprised and pleased to find himself able to listen to his words; and though the terrible strifes which he had recently undergone were still busy in his mind, he yet found pleasure in his new companion. Much of the old man’s conversation seemed, indeed, to be intended for his particular case. He spoke of the ‘various encounters to which mortals were subject. The necessity of confidence in

heaven's justice—the willingness to wait—the readiness to endure. He then spoke of the principle of love as he had spoken to Matilda. He insisted upon it as sufficiently strong to withstand the opposite principle of hate, and to trample over it in the end. The conflict, he said, would be long and perilous, and it would be continued through nations and individuals to the end of time ;—patience, he said, and perseverance, prompted by the spirit of love, which is eternal, would be certain to achieve the victory. In the meantime, it would be necessary that the labors of love should be increased and strengthened. We should strive to love one another, as the best policy, and the noblest moral economy. Every falling off in our affections from each other, was a gain to the rebelling principle of hate, and kept back humanity from its hope of heaven. Every increase in the amount of human love, was a succor to the sovereign principle ; as much so, as, in the warfare among men, would be the accession of new numbers. To love one another is to conquer evil, for as evil toils through the principle of hate, it can only be successful over us, by engendering in our bosoms hostility to our fellows, and a general faithlessness of each other, which must produce hostility. To confide, should be the first lesson,

as it is always the first and noblest proof of love!"

"This counsel strengthened Carl Werner and his wife, and made them both think. Carl felt calmer as he thought, and retired to his chamber with new and better resolutions. The old man prayed with the two before they retired; but though Carl knelt with the rest, he yet found it impossible to pray. He could only think, and his thoughts were confused, apprehensive, and not given, as he felt himself, to the sovereign principle of love. When he retired to his chamber, he resolved to pray alone; but he could not. He knelt by the bedside in vain. His tongue seemed to cleave to the roof of his mouth. His brain seemed to glow like fire, and he longed once more for the presence and the conversation of the aged man. He slept but little during the night, and when Matilda awakened at intervals, she heard nothing but his groans.

"The next day the old man sought an opportunity of conversation with Matilda in secret.

"My daughter," he said, "your husband must not go forth to-night. You must exert all your strength—all the strength of your love; spare no prayers, no solicitations, but you must keep him at home. He goes to pay homage to

the principle of hate. He must break his bondage. He must withhold his homage ; and he must prove that he renounces the hateful worship, ere the principle of love will come certainly to his aid. He will not find relief—he cannot be happy—till then ; and he must do this himself. We can do nothing towards it, save by our prayers, and these will be of little avail, until, of his own resolve, he breaks to you the secret of his sorrow. When he freely and voluntarily declares to you the trouble of his mind, he will find relief. To confide our wo to a beloved one, is to find healing. He must acknowledge this truth, ere he can hope for healing ; and it is a truth that he must teach himself. I warn you, therefore, unfold nothing that I have said to you, which shall move him to this determination, else it will be of no avail. We may tremble, but we must be silent ; and if our fears become stronger than our hopes, we must then only resort to our prayers.'

"That day the old man gave Carl himself a lesson which had its effect in promoting the wishes of all, though, to the passing thought, it would seem to have no necessary connexion with the misfortunes of the latter. He saw him in a condition of stupor, sitting upon the threshold, and evidently unconscious of all things around him.

“‘My son,’ he said, ‘we do not all our duties when we have said our prayers. Indeed, we may be said to do none of them, if we do but this. Our prayers are offered that we may have strength and judgment to perform our duties rightly and thoroughly. The first of these is industry. The decree of God—one of the first—is one of the elements of religion. “Thou shalt earn thy bread in the sweat of thy face.” He who prays merely, and toils none, is a hypocrite, and though he may deceive himself and his fellow men, he cannot deceive God by his professions.’

“‘Alas! my father—I would work,’ said the unhappy Carl, ‘but I cannot—I am sick—I am sad—too sad—too sick to work.’


“‘Hast thou tried, my son.’

“‘Of what use to try, my father. I feel that I should do nothing.’

“‘The will is the service, my son. God tasks not your service, but he receives the free tribute of your heart, and if the will is free to serve him, the amount of your body’s service is of little regard. Try—let the will govern the limbs, and they will do much. Certainly, thy labor will lessen the troubles of thy mind, which, in most cases, spring from the tyrannous imbecility of the frame.

Try, my son—thy labors will avail thee much more in thy sadness than all thy prayers.’

“ Carl obeyed, and strove diligently to labor, and though he did but little, yet he felt better from what he did. The old man conversed with him while he toiled, and he gathered goodly counsel, and pleasant consolation, from his words. But as the day waned, the agonizing apprehensions of Carl were renewed. The fascinating spells of the demon began to work upon his mind, and his increasing disquiet became visible to his household. At supper he was unconscious of the meats before him, until the words of the aged guest aroused his consideration, while he prayed for a blessing upon the repast. Carl gradually grew fixed in mute attention as he listened to the terms of this prayer, which was, in some respects, peculiar. The old man prayed that ‘ the fond husband might ever be heedful of the affections with which he had been endowed by the confiding wife — that he might heed the meaning of her pale cheek, her tearful eye, and laboring bosom — that he might never estrange himself from one who looked so much, so entirely to him, for countenance and comfort — and that the ways of error into which frail mortality was ever but too prone to fall, might never seduce



the regards of the comforter, from the weak but confiding heart to which they were entirely due.'

"Much more after this fashion was said by the old man, but these words had their effect. Carl looked upon his wife with eyes of closer inquiry than he had fixed upon her for many days. He saw, for the first time, that her cheek was pale — as if death had set his hand upon it — that her eye was full of tears — and that her bosom heaved with an anguish which her lips had never spoken. Her eye caught the glance of his own while he gazed, and she burst into a flood of tears — rose from the table — rushed to the spot where her husband sat, and threw herself at his feet. How dreadfully was he shocked by this movement! How bitterly did he reproach himself! He felt that he had been selfish — that, heedful of his own sufferings only, he had given neither eye nor thought to hers. He sank down upon the floor beside her; and he muttered broken words, imploring forgiveness. The venerable guest saw that the moment was come, when love was to obtain the mastery or forever fail; and without being seen by the two, he left the apartment. But his words had been deeply impressed upon the mind of Matilda, and she needed not his presence to prompt her in the performance of her task. She

poured out her full heart to her husband, told him of her fears during his absence, of her sufferings as she beheld the sapping and overcoming character of his, and implored him, for the love which he had once vowed her, as earnestly as if she had lost it. Long and trying was their conference, and more than once the wife despaired of her object. But though she trembled, she yet implored, and the principle of love prevailed. The heart of Carl was touched — the seal removed from the fountain — and he poured forth, in her astounded but unshrinking senses, the whole strange and dreadful secret.

XVIII.

“He had scarcely done so, when he heard a tap on the window, as of one claiming admission. He started, he trembled—a guilty fear rose in his throat and choked him.

“‘It is he — the demon — the spectre!’ he exclaimed, gaspingly.

“‘Bid him enter,’ cried the old man, who had returned to the apartment without their perceiving either his departure or his entrance, and who

seemed perfectly conversant with the whole narrative —

“ ‘ Bid him enter, Carl.’

“ But Carl hesitated and trembled. He moved not ; and Matilda rose to her feet.

“ ‘ I fear nothing !’ she exclaimed — ‘ I will throw open the window. If it be the spirit of Herman Ottfried, he will not harm me. If it be other than his, it cannot. God be with me — for I will do it !’

“ The voice of the old man arrested her, as she was about to do what she had said.

“ ‘ Daughter !’

“ She turned, and saw that his eye rested anxiously upon Carl, and she then understood that the office belonged to her husband. She did not need to look upon him twice. He had been praying while she spoke, and he now rose.

“ ‘ No, Matilda — the task should be mine. I have looked upon the fiend before — I do not fear to look upon him again. Still less do I fear — having your eyes upon, and your prayers for, me.’

“ A horrible yell of laughter reached his ears from the outside, and half unmanned him. He shivered all over ; but just then the aged guest repeated these words, as if for himself.

“ ‘ The Lord is my strength, and my redeemer.

He is with me, and I fear not the evil one. Be of good cheer, oh, my soul, for in this is thy strength. Thou shalt prevail in the strife with thy enemy, even as love prevaieth over hate, and the spirit of God over the spirit of the devil.'

"With a single blow of his fist, Carl threw wide the shutter, and though his voice trembled while he spoke, yet the words which he uttered were distinct —

" 'Enter — if it be God's will — enter!'

XIX.

"The mocking spectre was once more before him — and the grin of malice and imagined victory was again visible upon his countenance, until he beheld the form of the venerable guest, still kneeling upon the floor, with eyes and hands uplifted to heaven, and seeming as if he beheld him not. Then his whole aspect was altered. His grin became a bitter scorn, and, though he still wore the exact features of Herman Ottfried, yet the whole expression was so changed to that of a hellish hate, that, even to the eyes of Carl, the likeness seemed almost gone.

“ ‘Thou here!’ exclaimed the spectre, addressing the aged man.

“ ‘Thou seest!’ was the reply.

“ ‘I see—but thou art here in vain—thy prayers will avail him nothing—he hath bound himself to me. My power is upon his pledge. He cannot escape—he must meet me where I will; and when he forbears to come—when, urged by such as thee, he presumes to disobey, I will seek him with redoubled tortures, where he hides, and tear him from thy very altars. Carl Werner—I command thee. Come!’

“ Carl trembled all over, and he felt an irresistible power dragging him forward. At this moment the old man spoke—

“ ‘His pledge shall be fulfilled—but not to thee. Look, Satan!—God hath heard the prayers of love—and his messenger comes to release the thrall of hate. Look!—the pledge is redeemed?’

“As he spoke, he pointed to the opposite corner of the apartment, upon which his eyes had been earnestly fixed, even while the demon was addressing him. There, visible to all, stood another spectre, having the precise features of Herman Ottfried, and the very expression which he was wont to wear in life. The contrast between the

one and the other spectre, both having the same features, was prodigious! They represented different principles. The one had borne the features of punishment—the other came with the mild attributes of mercy. Alike in every feature, they were yet as utterly unlike as night and day.

“The demon put on a look of agony, mingled with hate and disappointment, as, with a howl and hiss, he fled from the presence of the spectre whose features he had worn for the purposes of hate, but whose glance of benignity and love he could not withstand. Howling with hate, he fled; while the gentle spirit advanced into the apartment.

“‘Oh, brother, dearest Herman!’ cried the sister, with a joyful accent, as she rushed towards him. She sunk down upon the spot where she would have embraced him, and her eyes beheld his shadowy form melting away, even like the last gleam of a lovely sunset into the distant shadows.

“‘Look to your wife, my son,’ said the aged man—‘she swoons—give her help.’

“Carl raised his wife, and in a little while she recovered—but the aged man had disappeared. They never saw him again.



'IPSISTOS.'

" With this —

I mix more lowly matter; with the thing
Contemplated, describe the mind of man,
Contemplating; and who, and what he was,
The transitory being that beheld
This vision, — when, and where, and how he lived."

Wordsworth.



'IPSISTOS.'

I.


WITH the first tokens of the gray dawning, and while yet the thin gray mists lay like a gauzy veil above the half-canopied mountains, the gates of the great city were thrown open, and the people thereof began to pour forth in mighty crowds. Like a swollen torrent, that forces its way over the barrier and broken rocks, they came roaring and rushing, less with the innate feeling of power than of enjoyment. A universal spirit of intoxication seemed to possess the multitude, and by tens, by twenties, and by hundreds, with wild and dissonant cries of mingling yet discordant voices, they pressed their way through the narrow gateway, and came forth clamoring upon the plain. The aged and the yet green in youth—wise, venerable men—devout matrons,—trembling and hopeful maidens,—and sportive childhood, that

laughs and leaps, were mingling together, until, even ere the sun had yet risen, the vast esplanade in front of the city was covered with their forms. One mighty will seemed to move in every heart, and to unite all voices in a universal song, as if for some great deliverance. An hundred thousand tongues mingled in the strain, and the hills that surrounded them gave back the melody with a seven-fold echo.


“Lofty and beautiful is the temple that stands above the hill!” Such was the song of the multitude. — “Lofty is the temple on the high hill, and lovely is the goddess who sits in power therein. Let us to the temple, oh! ye people. Let us bow down before the goddess thereof, and bury our faces in the sacred dust that lies at her footstool. Let us put her feet upon our necks, and grow great by reason of our abasement. Let us carry the fatted lamb and the bleating kid, for sweet is the savor of the burnt offering in her nostrils, and she smiles when the flamen smites the heavy ox in the forehead, and his dying blood besprinkles her garments. To the temple on the hill, oh! ye people, — to the lovely goddess who dwells therein. Let us fly to her worship, — let us bring our offerings, — the fatted lamb and the calf, and the bleating kid, — let us twine about their necks the

flowers that are in season, and hang their brows with clusters of the bleeding grape, that so we may show our love for the goddess and the priests, and our reverence for the white temple that stands lofty upon the hill."

And when these words were ended, the shouting of the far-stretching multitude grew great again, like the clamor of meeting winds and waters; and they ran towards the white temple that rose proudly on the high hill in the rosy light of the morning—the swift leading the way, and the strong rushing after, giving no heed to the cries and the groans of the feeble and the young, whom they overthrew and trampled in the fury of their flight. Well did they know that the goddess whom they sought would freely forgive the evil which happened only from the overflowing of their zeal in her worship. And many were the priests that did homage for that people around the altars of the goddess. And they prayed before her presence, that she would come forth and lend grace to her worshippers by the smile of her benignant countenance. And the multitude brought great store of gold and jewels, and with gifts of value rewarded those who served them in this wise. They brought bracelets for the arms of solid gold, and bright drops of amber and of pearl—



of jewels from the mine, and pale blue water-gems from the deep—to hang around the necks, and fasten in the ears, of that sacred priesthood. And the holy men prayed steadfastly before the goddess for the multitude, and the goddess vouchsafed to hear and to smile upon their prayers. And the golden gates of the temple were thrown wide, and the multitude shouted anew by reason of their exceeding joy; and, in the madness of their devotion, many of them rushed towards the golden entrance, ere the priest had yet veiled the glory shining from within; but were driven back and blinded by the streams of excessive light which encountered them as they came. But soon the gong sounded, which was the signal for the goddess to appear—and the guards that waited upon the priests, with their golden lances, drove back the impatient multitude from the path of the procession, which was to move towards the great city, that it might be blessed with the presence of the goddess. Then, as the crowd gave way, came forth the car of the sun, borne by the sacred ox, whose horns, covered with gold, had each a glorious emerald shining thereon. And the rays of that golden orb dazzled the eyes of those who too confidently beheld it, and they threw themselves upon the sands as it came, and the sacred ox



pressed with heavy feet upon their necks. Then, perched upon a crystal bough, and borne by a lovely boy, whose long yellow hair floated in trained luxuriance down his back, came forth the milk-white pigeon, which bore the words of the goddess to her distant worshippers; and the boy that carried the pigeon was blind from his birth, and it was the eyes of the sacred bird that guided him in his progress; and sometimes, as he went, the pigeon would fly off from the bough to bear the words of the goddess to the priesthood, and at such moments the boy stood still. Next came one whose arms were bound to his side, and he was clothed in yellow garments, and he bore upon his head a crystal globe, which was the sign of eternity, and within might be seen a butterfly with folded wing, and this was the sign of immortality. He was followed by an hundred others, bound and attired like himself, and their bonds were a token that they opposed not the will of the goddess; and they bore the globe and butterfly by turns. As they advanced from the temple, the mighty and mixed multitude, which had fallen into sudden silence when the golden sun came forth, now, as suddenly, rose into clamorous rejoicing—the hills shook in their shouting; and, from the vast circle of the plain, the continued voices bore to the city

the glad tidings of the coming of the goddess. Next came the slaves—an hundred ebon-dyed slaves from Ethiopia—and they bore heavy censers of crystal; and ever and anon they scattered sweet incense among the people. A girdle of silver cloth was wrapped about their loins, and they wore a collar of silver, and a chain about the neck, of silver also. A chosen band followed these, of the youth dedicated to the priesthood; and they wore no badges, and their garments were of the coarsest woollen. After these came the sages, the wisest and the most venerable among those who had given themselves to the service of the goddess from their childhood. They wore long white beards, and they were greatly revered among the people by reason of their close neighborhood to the goddess, and as they were the first to know and to declare her irrevocable decrees. In their secret abodes they had traced the history and duties of the heavenly bodies—had locked up the niggard sciences in narrow cells, making them servants, and denying them to that world which they were intended to inform; but which, in its inferior ignorance, might only have abused their offices. To these succeeded the artificers, the painters, the builders, the workers in fire, and the secret properties of subtle minerals. Then came

the high priest, an experienced magician, than whom the great city knew none more wise and more in favor with the goddess. He stood upon the platform, which was of solid brass, upon which the throne of the goddess was raised. His robes were of sable, but under them might be seen a belt of purple and living fire. A serpent twined itself about his arm, and sometimes lifted its green head above the shoulder of the priest, whose hand grasped it by the middle. As he advanced, his presence announced that of the Deity, and was acknowledged by an astounding shout from the anxious multitude. The car of the goddess, itself a temple, now rolled heavily through the brazen entrance. It was drawn by the ponderous behemoth, whose hoofs were coated with silver, and whose forward step shook the solid earth over which he came. Around the car, a troop of lovely priestesses danced on feet that spurned the air, and their forms, flexible as light, melted and sunk away into continual and changing shapes of grace and luxuriance ; and tears of light gathered in the eyes of the young men of the multitude, as they looked upon their voluptuous involutions. These closed the procession, and as they passed from the brazen door of the temple, it shut, of itself, with a startling and tremendous sound.

II.

But there was one of all that mighty and mixed multitude, that felt not with the rest — that saw not with their eyes, nor measured the things he saw by their understandings. He came with them from the city, for he dared not remain behind, in that time of general jubilee ; but his voice joined not with the rest in swelling the clamor of rejoicing. With slow steps and a sick spirit, he followed far behind, and his heart grew cold in his bosom, as he beheld their wild impatience, and witnessed the headlong fury of their devotion. Their cries stunned and troubled him, and the big tears gathered upon his eye-lashes.

“ Beautiful, indeed,” murmured Ipsistos to his own heart, — “ beautiful, indeed, is the goddess, — lovely beyond the loveliness of woman, whom the keen eye of the builder beheld, where she lay buried in the bosom of the solid rock, whence his nice hand and searching instrument of steel, gave her release. With the fine touch of endowing art he removed the rude diuts of the heavy masses which had lain so long upon her visage, and brought back the light into her features, and the

life which belongs only to expression, which had been banished from them so long. In her temple have the people raised her, and they behold in her countenance nothing but perfection. In her they see the embodied form of the universal and diffusive truth, and they claim for her the possession of a perfect beauty. But to me all the sweet conviction, which makes the heart confident in its hope, and brings it peace, seems utterly denied. To me she does not seem the true ; neither, though she is beautiful, can I esteem her the perfect beauty which so immutable a goddess should be. She wins not my heart when I behold her, — her charms gather only upon mine eyes. With reluctant hand I lay the first fruits upon her altars even as I am bidden, but she knows that it is only as I am bidden that I bring them, and though she smiles upon others, she, methinks, hath a frown only and ever for me. I pray to her for the blessing, and she withholds it ; yet wherefore should she withhold it when I pray only to be wise. Alas ! I inquire of these things in vain. The mists gather more thickly around me, and when my brethren cry loudest in rejoicing for the light which ascendeth, then, upon my sight, the darkness falls more heavily than ever. My soul is sorrowful within me. The prayer that I make returns upon

me with the bitterness of rejection. Wherefore should this be so? Wherefore, of all this multitude, should I, alone, be joyless and voiceless? My brothers—they come back from the temple, having the song still upon their lips, and the smile still in their hearts. My sisters enter with laughter the dwelling of my father, though poverty sits upon the hearth, and weeps because of the cold. The smile of the goddess hath blessed them, until they forget the withered and wrinkled grandsire whom they leave famishing at home. Alas! for me, when I see the burnt offerings and the fruits upon the altars of the goddess, I think not upon her worship, but upon his want. Wherefore should the goddess need as a testimony of our homage the waste of her own fruits, which had else cheered the heart and strengthened the limbs of age and poverty. Wherefore — ah!”

A terrible voice sounded in the ears of the youth :

“ Ipsistos !”

He shivered with terror as he looked up. The car of the goddess was rolling onwards, and her eye was fixed upon him with a glance that seemed to search and freeze his soul. The voice of the chief priest, a second time, reached his ears in low accents, unheard by any but the youth.

"Ipsistos! The eye of the goddess is upon thee. She looks into thy heart. She beholds thy discontent. Beware!"

The youth sank upon his knees, and clasping his hands above his head, he bowed his face to the dust while the car passed onwards.

"Alas!" moaned the stricken youth as the crowd rolled between him and the priest, "I am doomed!"

And there he lay prostrate and desponding, while the elated crowd, forgetting all wretchedness of their brother, felt only the triumph of that power which permitted them to kneel!

III.

"Ipsistos!" said the sacred messenger of the temple, touching the melancholy youth with the spiral rod of his office, — "thou art called."

"Whither?" demanded the youth.

"To the temple!" was the answer of authority.

"I obey! — I follow thee!" said the youth, with fear and trembling.

"It is well. Bermahdi awaits thee."

And Ipsistos prepared to follow as he was commanded, and his heart was full of fears; for had he

not heard from Bermahdi that the goddess was a jealous goddess — quick to see the falling off of the worshipper at her altars, and terrible in her punishments for every departure from the law as it is written.

“Fare thee well, my father,” cried the youth,
—“I am commanded to leave thee for a while.”

“Who commands thee, my son?” said the venerable man.

“Bermahdi.”

“Ha! — Thou hast sinned, my son. Thou hast sinned against the goddess.”

“I fear me.”

And the old man trembled, and fell upon his face, as the favorite of his eyes departed.

IV.

Ipsistos stood in the presence of Bermahdi, the white-bearded, and his heart sank within him. Wondrous was the chamber in which he stood, — strange were all the objects and aspects around him. The roof of that chamber was vaulted like the sky, and studded with a thousand stars. Clouds hung aloft, now rising and now receding, and from them, at moments, Ipsistos could see the keen

and cold eye of the goddess looking down upon him. The vault was upborne by gigantic figures of black marble, that moved around him in a constant circle ; and, ever and anon, a heavy instrument of sounding metal told the progress of the never stopping hours. A burning mirror stood upright against the wall, and Ipsistos beheld within it the constant progress of things as they concerned the people of the goddess. And he saw himself within it, even he, Ipsistos, but the figure paused not, but disappeared at the waving of the hand of Bermahdi. The chief priest sat before a table of red porphyry, on which the characters and signs of the seasons were inscribed. Instruments of strange form, and to him, unknown uses, lay upon the table. Bermahdi was a magician of unbounded wisdom, and his studies were as various as the faces of the stars of heaven. He seemed, even then, to be toiling in the divine arts of astrology ; and when Ipsistos regarded his stern but venerable aspect, and saw the strange instruments around him, and beheld the books in languages unknown, gathered with great pains and at wondrous cost from the remotest nations,—his awe, mingling with the apprehensions which his soul felt at the summons of the sacred messenger, be-

came a sort of terror, and he trembled in the presence of the holy man.

“ Ipsistos !” said Bermahdi, “ approach !”

And as the youth drew nigh to the table an hundred serpents sprang forward, with hissing fury and open jaws, ready to devour the intruder ; but, at the word of Bermahdi, they crawled back to the slimy baskets where they had lain coiled in sleep, and offered no farther interruption to his approach.

“ Ipsistos ! thou had’st been doomed but for thy youth. Thou art poor and feeble, else thou had’st perished. Had’st thou been high among the people, — high of birth and fortune, — this night thou had’st fed the sacred serpents of the goddess, whom, in thy secret thoughts, thou hast contemned. Wherefore is this madness, Ipsistos ? Thy brothers are devout worshippers, — they come with glad hearts and full hands to the temple, — they bend with reverence before the altar, — they heed the words of the goddess, and question not her laws. But thou dost not, Ipsistos. In thy vain soul thou hast asked — ‘ why is this ?’ With thy shallow understanding, thou wouldst judge the decrees which are written for the world. Why dost thou not believe, and trust, and do homage like thy brothers ?”

“ Alas ! father ! wherefore ? It is from thee

that I would have the answer. Thou art the favored of the goddess,—I pray thee implore her that she tell me, why I am other in spirit than my brothers?”

The holy man frowned gloomily as he listened to these words of the unhappy youth.

“What, boy!—wouldst thou demand of the goddess, why is this, and wherefore is that. I tell thee that thy presumption prays a sudden judgment upon thee. Thy vain thoughts are working out thy doom.”

“Be merciful, father. I would not offend with my presumption. I would school my heart unto humility. It is to know the right only that I ask to know at all. My prayer is for wisdom only.”

“Thy prayer is insolent, boy. What! shall we be all Magi. Shall wisdom be a thing to cast in equal lots,—shall we demand of the goddess to be other than we are. Foolish and audacious boy. Thou must learn to obey, ere thou art wise—to trust those who are the born counsellors of the land,—who have authority for judgment from the goddess. Hast thou lived so long, and art thou still ignorant of her power? Hast thou seen nothing to shew to thee the might which she has, beyond that of thee and all thy people, and which she puts forth daily through the hands of those who tend upon her altars? Hast thou not listened

to her oracles ? Does she not foretell the plague which kills, the tempest which desolates, the ruler of the city who shall best serve its interests, the coming of the enemy whom ye fear ? Does not her power dissipate the enemy, stay the plague, repair the city, provide the ruler ? Is thy people prosperous or not ?”

“Alas ! father, poverty sits upon the hearth of my sire, and the flesh is shrivelled upon his aged limbs. The city is prosperous, but my father lacks bread for his hunger, and he hath no raiment against the cold.”

“And what of this, idle boy. What is the pleasure or the life of one, or even of a thousand, in consideration of this great argument. Thy life is but a span at best, and something must end it. The goddess that gives thee life, hath surely a right to prescribe its laws, its limits, and its vicissitudes. Believe this, and thy father suffers little ; but even this pretence shall be denied thee for complaint. Thou shalt carry from the temple this night the food which shall make him strong, and the garments which shall bring the blood back into his aged limbs. Will that content thee ?”

“I will bless thee for it, father.”

“And be true and joyful in thy worship of the goddess ?”

"I will strive — with all my soul and with all my strength, I will strive," replied Ipsistos.

"Thou shalt, or it shall be worse for thee. Lo ! — Here shalt thou see the power of the goddess. Thou shalt behold sights never yet vouchsafed to thy people. Look ! What seest thou ?"

And, as he spake, the magician uttered a word of power, and the brooding cloud rolled away from overhead, and the sun hung his broad and burning shield above the eyes of Ipsistos, though, it was then the mid hour of the night, so that they were confounded and darkened by the blaze. And when he looked again, the cold pale moon was shining in its place.

"Thou hast seen the mansions of the sun and moon, — they are ever present to the goddess, and visible at her command. Some of her power she will now confer, even upon thee, that thou may'st no longer doubt of her worship. Grasp me that wand of ebony which thou seest upon the edge of yon fountain."

The youth did so, and of a sudden it became a serpent in his grasp. He flung it to the ground, and it once more became a wand of ebony.

"Thou seest ; but that is not all. Thou shalt cross unharmed upon those fiery bars over which it is written that every devotee should go. But

first put off thy sandals, and put on these sacred shoes which have been hallowed upon the altar of the goddess."

The youth put on the shoes as he was directed, and at the same instant a part of the wall opened before him, and he beheld a bridge of fire-bars which spanned a cavernous hollow of vast extent, in which he could see nothing, but from which there came a continual roaring like the evering anthem of the sea. The youth shrank back from the trial, but Bermahdi encouraged him.

"Fear nothing!" he said, — "For thou wearest sandals which have been hallowed by the goddess." A voice, soft but clear, sad but melodious, reached his ears an instant after, which repeated the words of encouragement.

"Fear nothing, Ipsistos. There is nought to harm thee!"

"What voice is that!" cried Bermahdi, with looks of unfeigned astonishment.

"Was it not the voice of the goddess?" said Ipsistos, — "methought it was she who spoke."

"Ay, it was, — it must have been!" cried Bermahdi, — "it must have been the goddess. Thou seest, my son, that she loves thee. Fear nothing."

"Fear nothing, Ipsistos," said the gentle voice once more.

And the heart of Ipsistos was full of joy as he heard it, but the countenance of Bermahdi was troubled. The youth felt tears of pleasure steal out upon his cheek, for the tones of that sweet speaker sunk like music and peace into his heart. He feared no longer, Boldly he advanced upon the blazing bars, which, to his great wonder, gave out no heat. And when he had passed over the bridge to the opposite side of the cavern, he stood in the presence of the goddess. But her looks were lovely no longer. Anger blazed in her eyes, and her lips were distorted by reason of the passion within her breast.

"This is strange," said Bermahdi, — "strange that she should frown upon thee, Ipsistos, when thou hast passed through the first trial of the novice. Thou wilt become a novice, my son."

"Wherefore, father?"

"See'st thou not that she frowns upon thee?"

The youth was silent.

"Ha! dost thou refuse?" cried Bermahdi.

"No, no — I refuse not — but suffer me to think upon it, my father. I am not yet worthy — I would meditate upon the wonders I have seen."

"Thou shalt! Go now in safety. The path

is clear. Nothing shall harm thee on thy way. But see that thou hast early thought upon this, my son. Thou hast thought, already, too much or too little, and thy error must be amended. Remember! the eyes of the goddess are upon thee."

Again the gentle voice whispered in his ears.

"Fear nothing, Ipsistos;" and when he looked upon the statue of the goddess, her features were convulsed with anger. A stream of fire seemed to issue from her eyes, and with a shivering fear that ran through all his veins like a sudden ague, the youth fled from her terrific presence.

V.

He fled, but the gentle voice still lingered in his ears, and as he left the portals of the temple, its tones of encouragement were repeated.

"Fear nothing, Ipsistos. I am she whom in thy secret soul thou lovest; and I am powerful to protect thee. Let the tyrant rage; he shall not prevail against thy thought, nor against the true worship which is already living in thy spirit. He may cast thee into a dungeon—he may load thee with chains—in his brute anger he may buffet thee, and with his keen thong he may cover thee with

stripes ; but of a surety shalt thou live through all, and glorious shall be thy triumph in the end. Fear nothing, Ipsistos— for, so long as thou keep-
est my voice in thy ears, so long shalt thou live, and so sure shall be thy great victory over thy enemy. Thou shalt tread upon his neck, Ipsistos.”

And the youth grew bold to speak to the voice as he hearkened to these grateful words, and he said —

“ And how, oh, sweetest whisper of the night— thou that stealest upon mine ear like a music from heaven, and sinkest, blessing, into my heart like a balmy food thereof ; — how am I to keep thee forever nigh to me ? Tell me, that I may not lose thee.”

“ By keeping me ever in thy heart, as thou dost now. By seeking me as thou hast ever done !”

“ How ! blessed voice— have I ever sought thee before, when, until this hour, mine ears remember not to have heard thee.”

“ Thine ear hath not heard me, Ipsistos, but day and night, even from the hour of thy birth, have I spoken to thy heart. Thou hast truly called me a music from heaven, and a balmy food thereof. I am both— for I am that principle without which

no music could be such in the ears of the good, and no food could give nourishment."

"What art thou!" demanded the trembling youth.

"Truth! Doth not thy own heart teach thee?" was the answer.

"Alas — but it did not!" replied Ipsistos.

"Of a surety it did, Ipsistos, from the first moment when thou felt'st that thou could'st not love the creature which thy people worship with a wild and headlong idolatry. Thou could'st not think her beautiful, because, in thy own heart, thou beheld'st a yet lovelier image."

"And shall I see thee with mine eyes, oh, thou, whom my soul worships," cried the youth, sinking on his knees, and lifting his hands together, as if the object of his adoration stood even then unveiled before him.

"Yea, thou mayst if thou so wishest it; but I warn thee, Ipsistos, in the hour that thou regardest me with thy human eyes—in that hour shalt thou surely die. Art thou ready?"

Prostrate in the dim night, the youth sunk down in silence. But in silence he remained not long.

"Give me to behold thee," he cried aloud to the voice—"Give me to look upon the blessed and beautiful features of that divine being who is

in my lifted heart, and death shall be welcome. Gladly will I embrace it, for thy sake, sweetest and loveliest of the dreams that have won me from sleep, and made life, itself, a dream."

"Thou art bold, now, Ipsistos ; but when death looks upon thee with his grim aspect, and claims thee for his own — "

"Even then will I be bold !" cried the undaunted youth.

"When thou feel'st his steely grasp upon thy shoulder !"

"I will laugh upon him—I will defy him with a song in thy praise."

"When he drags thee to the roaring blaze, and the burning fagots crackle and hiss around thee ! —"

"Ha ! — must it, then, be so !" cried the youth, shuddering, and covering his face with his hands.

"Perhaps !" said the voice. "Wilt thou not then shrink from thy faith ? Wilt thou not then forswear me ? Wilt thou not deny that thou hast seen my face, and hearkened to my counsel, as thou dost now ? Death is terrible, Ipsistos !"

"I will not ! Though death be terrible, I will not shrink from the danger — I will not deny thee, nor forget the faith which I have pledged thee, and which I pledge thee here."

"And yet 'twere pity, Ipsistos, that thy youth should perish thus. Think of thy old grandsire."

"Ah!"

"Thy brothers and thy sisters."

"Alas! they need me not. Did they love me, and need me more, I were less bold, perchance, in this encounter. My grandsire hath not many days of life, and even were I gone from him, but little were his loss therein. The promise which thou makest me, moves me more than these fears and losses which thou describest unto me. Give me to look upon thy divine presence, and see the beauties which are there, and I am ready for the stake, and for the cruel executioner. Tell me, shall I not behold thee now?"

"Not yet!" cried the voice. "Thou could'st not see me now, even if thou would'st, and I were willing to suffer thee. There are scales upon thine eyes, which must first fall off. There is yet a fetter upon thy thought which must be broken; and thou hast learned lessons in thy mind, which must be unlearned, ere thou can'st behold me. Yet shall I not be utterly unseen of thee. Even now, if thou lookest keenly, thou may'st behold a faint shadow of my person beside thee, and, as thou strivest to behold me and hearkenest to my voice, my features shall grow clear unto thine eyes, — thy

flesh to my touch,—thy soul shall be filled with my spirit. But I warn thee, in that time thou diest. Thy danger begins with thy knowledge, and in the moment of thy greatest victory, shalt thou perish.”

And the youth gazed as he was bidden, and a shadowy form passed beside him, and the stars yielded in their places, and all things swam before his sense. When he looked again, the shadow and the voice were gone.

VI.

“I bring thee food, my father,” said Ipsistos; and he placed before the aged man the viands which had been given him by the high priest of the temple.

“Ha! my son, — be thou blessed among the sons of men, as thou art blest and beloved by thy sire. Whence got'st thou these meats — this bread, and the luscious grapes which thou puttest before me.”

“From Bermahdi.”

“From Bermahdi! — Blessed be Bermahdi — blessed be the holy temple — forever honored the goddess therein.”

And the aged man kneeled as he said these words, and the young women and the sons kneeled also, all but Ipsistos.

"How, my son, — wherefore kneelest thou not with us? — would'st thou withhold thy blessings and thy thanks?"

"My thanks have been already given, my father. I have spoken with Bermahdi in the temple."

"In the temple! — Ha! have I been so blessed in my old age as to behold a son of mine who hath had admittance to the temple of the goddess. Let me look upon thee, — let me kneel to thee, my son, for of a truth the goddess hath greatly favored thee."

"Kneel not to me, — look not upon me, father, but eat of the meats sent thee by Bermahdi. I am blind, and weak, and not worthy of thy regard."

"But thou saw'st the wondrous things of the temple, my son, — the giants which are there fettered beneath the feet of the goddess, — the sacred serpent that speaks at her bidding; — the holy owl of counsel, and the ape, the ox, the emeralds —"

"I saw many things, my father, of which I took little heed."

"Little heed, my son, — little heed! What

"And it is the truth only which I tell thee now, my father. Bermahdi hath commanded me to serve in the temple, in season to become a priest."

"A priest!" cried the elder brother in amazement.

"A priest!" cried they all, in wonder at the apparent madness or gross presumption of the youth.

"Thou a priest!" said the elder brother.—
"What should make thee a priest, when thy awkward hands let fall the garlands ere they reach the altar."

"Thou a priest!" exclaimed the eldest sister.—
"How would thy long arms look in the holy garments?—they would drag about thy heels like a great mill-sack."

"Only to think," said the younger sister, the favorite of Ipsistos, "only to think of making thee a priest, Ipsistos, when I have ridden upon thy shoulders a thousand times."

"Nay, flout not thy brother, my children—ye make me sad as I behold his sorrows. Flout him not, though, in truth, my son, thy story is most strange."

"Yet true, my father. Do not these fruits speak for me? They are from the altar of the temple."

This could not be denied. The brothers and

"And what said Bermahdi to thee, my son?" demanded the grandsire.

"He would have me in the service of the goddess," replied Ipsistos.

"Ha! thou dost not say it!" cried the rejoicing father.

"He! a servant in the temple!" cried the eldest of the brothers. — "Ha! ha! ha! This is a folly, if not worse. Thou speak'st idly, Ipsistos, — I trust thou dost not wilfully declare thy falsehood."

"I speak the truth only, my brother," meekly replied Ipsistos.

"I will not believe it," cried the rest. — "Wherefore should they make thee a servant in the temple. What hast thou, — what art thou? Thou art mad, Ipsistos. Thou art poor, and what is thy father? Made he not bricks for the city, even for those who are now living and can declare his craft; and what is thy craft, but the same, Ipsistos, which thou art only too idle to follow."

"True, true, Ipsistos, — thou must surely err in this," cried the old man, sorrowfully. — "Wherefore should Bermahdi choose thee to serve in the temple. Thy brothers speak but reason; — and yet, my children, Ipsistos hath never yet told me other than the truth."

"And it is the truth only which I tell thee now, my father. Bermahdi hath commanded me to serve in the temple, in season to become a priest."

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"Yet true, my father. Do not these fruits speak for me? They are from the altar of the temple."

This could not be denied. The brothers and

sisters of the youth had seen them carried to the temple. And the old man marvelled much upon the mystery; he could not yet be satisfied of his son's truth, for when had the son of a maker of brick, been called to such sacred office. Meanwhile, a grievous suspicion of Ipsistos grew in the hearts of his brethren. And they whispered among themselves, and their evil thought came to the ears of the father.

"He hath stolen these things from the altar of the goddess. Of a truth he hath committed sacrilege."

And with these words the aged man dashed from his lips the untasted viands, and his jaws were distended with the horror of the thought.

"What hast thou done, Ipsistos? My son, my best beloved, wherefore hast thou done this thing?"

"They wrong me, my father, for, of a truth, I am not guilty of this base crime. The fruits were given to me, for thee, by the hands of Bermahdi."

"Swear it, by the temple and the goddess! and I will believe thee," said the father.

"It will not then be a greater truth than it is now, my father. Believe me, as I tell thee, but I

will not swear;" and he rushed from the dwelling as he spoke these words.

"He is guilty!" cried the brothers with joy, but the old man hung his head in shame.

"Alas!" he cried, "wherefore was I born to this dishonor."

And the sons hurried away to the chief priest, to declare the theft and to restore the consecrated fruits; but the old man lay upon his face at the door of his habitation, and would not be comforted.

VII.

"And ye say," said Bermahdi, to the brethren of Ipsistos, "ye say that your brother is no true servant of the goddess — that he bows not in reverence at her altars — that he gives not his soul with the fruits which he offers — that he loves not her high places, nor the holy priesthood that minister before her?"

"Of a truth, we say it," replied the envious brethren:

"Ye are wrong," answered to them the high priest, "ye know not the heart of your brother.

What though he worship in another fashion from ye, still is he a devout worshipper. I have seen into his soul, my children ; it is no less pure than yours. The goddess hath chosen him for her altars, and ye are no less honored in her choice than is he. Hence was her gift to him, for thy grandsire, of the fruits and meats which he carried home to your habitation. Do him no injustice, therefore, by your ungentle thoughts, for truly do I believe him honest. Yet, I would not, that ye should hold me unnoteful of your zeal. Ye shall give it employment. See that Ipsistos lacks not, nor falls short, in his flow of service. If ye deem him laggard—if ye notice any falling off in his outward devotions, though it may import no loss of love within—yet bring me true report of his backslidings, that I may counsel him providently, and tutor him unto the good work which is ready for his hands. And, as ye have so fully shown your zeal for the altars of the goddess, ye shall have like share with your brother of the fruits therefrom. Take ye, and eat, and bear ye home to your grandsire, of the fruits which remain unconsumed. And let this be a sign unto ye, that ye are all the care of the goddess, and your house henceforward shall be the abiding place of blessing and abundance. Go ye now—remember well what I have

spoken in your ears touching the devotion of Ipsistos, and come to me and reveal in secret what ye may misdeem of his thoughts and misdoing ; for though I believe not that your brother is erring, yet the best of us falter in our walks of duty, and the strongest sink at times under a weakness of sinew which should make them sorrowful and ashamed. Go now, and the blessing of the goddess be upon ye."

And the brethren of Ipsistos went away, with hearts of rejoicing and with hands of plenty ; and they rejoiced not more because of the favor of the goddess than of the charge which had been given them to be watchful of the doings of their brother. And in their hearts they abused the counsels of the holy Bermahdi, for, whereas, he had given it in charge to them to report on the backslidings of Ipsistos that he might be providently led back into the fold of the temple, and they took his words as a direction to find evil in his wanderings, and to prove the flaws in all his performances. And those that Bermahdi had named as zealous for the goddess, grew to be zealous spies upon the failings of their brother ; and in their hearts they said —

" Bermahdi will punish Ipsistos if he goes aside from the path leading to the temple. He means

not to counsel but to condemn, for is not the goddess a jealous goddess, and does not her breath destroy the offender, though it be a sin of his ignorance only, and his first sin. Of a surety will she destroy this brother, whose pride of heart lifts him above us, and who, in a vain conceit of soul, thinks to be wiser than his father. Well—he shall not be missed when Bermahdi calls for the victim.”

Thus communing, they returned to the dwelling of their father, and their hearts were filled with wrath when they found that their grandsire now loved Ipsistos more than before, and took but little heed of the abundance of fruits which they had brought with them from the temple. And he called upon them to rejoice with him, and to implore blessings upon their brother, saying—

“ Verily, Ipsistos, my son, thou art my best beloved, and the favorite of the goddess. Join with me, my children, and give praise to your brother; for he hath cheered our hearth with the blessings of heaven, and hath smoothed my passage to the tomb. Blessed of the goddess, Ipsistos, be thou also the blessed of thy father and thy brethren.”

And the brothers murmured among themselves, and, more than ever, they hated him by reason of the exceeding love of their father. All hated him

but the young maiden, his sister, the youngest of all, whose name was Damaina ; and she flung herself upon the neck of Ipsistos, and called him her dear brother, and shed tears of joy and reverence upon his neck. And the brothers turned from beholding her, and they spake together apart, and they asked of each other how best they should obey the commands of Bermahdi, and seek out the backslidings of Ipsistos.


VIII.

But the youth heeded not their doings, nor imagined the feelings in their hearts. In his own a sweet sadness prevailed, a shadow from his searching thought, that moved over strangest places, and wandered into worlds far beyond his arm. His life strayed afar from the accustomed paths of his boyhood ; for the voice was ever in his ears, — the voice whose tones were a perfect melody which he might not resist, — and they led him away from the crowded places, and they tempted him to fields which had ever been forbid. In the presence of his brethren he had little comfort, and his mood found no fellowship among those who had once given him most sweet society. With

sad eyes, but without complaint, did his grandsire behold the shadow that was upon the youth, and the friends of his boyhood, and his young sister Damaina, the best beloved of all, reproached him loudly for his desertion. But Ipsistos only sighed to them in return ; and he walked apart to hide the tears which were in his eyes, though his heart was softened only with a becoming joy.

“ They chafe with me now,” he said to himself in musing, “ but will they chafe with me when I bring them to a sight of her whom my soul loveth ; when they look upon the divine light of her eyes, and feel the blessed tones of her voice sink like a balm from heaven into their hearts.”

And a holy pride filled his bosom as he thought that he should bring those who loved him to such superior enjoyment. And he followed the voice ; and came to a mighty wood which was dusky with gigantic forms, each having a double shadow. And he wandered away among the shadows 'till they grew like a bannered army around him, and he laid himself down at their feet, and they hung above him, and he thought unutterable things. But the thoughts gave him pain at length, for they came like pictures that pass rapidly in the uncertain light before the eye. And he failed to know



them or perceive their offices. Vainly did he strive to fix them with his revolving mind ; but they fled from him, looking behind them as they fled, and showing him glimpses of their beguiling features. Through the dim mazes of his mind he struggled to trace their flight, but others came between, and so he was confounded ; and he prayed for counsel and help from the voice, and even as he prayed he slept.

IX.

And the sleep of the youth was troubled, and strange visions prevailed in his slumbers. A thousand streaming lights, that seemed half girt with a drapery of cloud, danced around him in the closing void. Then, as they departed, mighty shadows rose even from the earth at his feet, and they floated away from before his sight, only to give place to other and mightier shadows yet. These came in sable and timed array, — a gorgeous company of trooping forms, having strange shapes that yielded to the light ; and they bore solemn banners that went trailing through the sky. Then, a mightier form than all the rest, — a shadowless form, full of light that yet gave none forth, —

came following after, and Ipsistos saw that it wore a crown upon its head, and yet the face beneath it was hidden from his straining gaze. From the midst of the crown rose a broad tongue of flame, that waved to and fro among the clouds by reason of the rapid motion of the shadow. And the shadow stood still when it hung above the spot where the youth was sleeping, and the tongue of fire which was upon the crown ceased to move in the wind. And, even as he looked, Ipsistos beheld a sheet of flame pass out from the tongue, and it fell from cloud to cloud, and it parted them all, and it rested upon his own forehead. And at the same moment the mighty shadows which had hung around him, with brows of dusk and threatening, took to flight with a rushing noise, and the youth could hear them scream while they flew, as if pursued by a mighty terror. And a bright light, like the bursting of a meteor, fell around him, and he heard a voice like that which had counselled him before, louder and more piercing but not less musical, that stopt his ascending spirit, and riveted his wandering thought.

“Arise, Ipsistos, thou art called unto thy office. Thy sleep is over. The light is around thee,—the promise of the day. Tarry not, but come.”

And a shivering fell upon the sleeper as he heard these warning accents, and marvelled at the increased power of the voice : and his heart sunk within him, not as he felt unwillingness to serve as he was bidden, but because he despaired of doing his service fitly, by reason of his inability. And he said to himself as he awakened, —

“Now, wherefore should I be chosen for this mighty work ? Am I not the son of the brick-maker, — is not my extraction mean, and, of a certainty, I have not been taught in the mysteries of the college, nor in the divine languages of past ages ? I am but mocked with this sweet delusion, — I do but cheat myself with the vanities of mine own heart.”

And the voice came to his ears again from among the pale groves, that lay behind him in the silence of their birth-hour. And the voice was sweeter in his ears than ever, and it was strong also. And it cheered him with words of encouragement.

“Wherefore should'st thou doubt of thy own fitness for the work of her whom thou lovest ? I tell thee, Ipsistos, that the servant is honored by the service, and the work of truth takes no honor from the proudest and the wealthiest, — nay, not even from the wisest in the land. Thy humility

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is becoming in thee, and is the best wisdom thou canst bring to my service. But thou must be bold too, and confident, — humble, because thou well knowest how little is thy knowledge in respect to truth, — bold, as it is thy purpose to have knowledge of the truth only. Come to me in this valley of shadow, — build here thy altars ; and hither bring the constant offering of thy heart, not of thy hands. Come.”

And the voice melted away in his ears, and the youth heard nothing but the murmuring of the wind as it streamed upon its way among the branches of the bending lindens. But he rose as he was bidden, and went forward to the silent dwelling of the shade from whence the sounds had arisen. And, as his feet faltered, by reason of his uncertainty, the voice whispered him on his true path, and strengthened him to come.

X.

And Ipsistos sought the pale groves where the voice dwelt, and he entered them with fear and trembling. A mystery hung over them like that which hangs above the mansion in the dreams and darkness of the night. And a sound, like

that of a complaining water, that keeps a ceaseless travel through all hours, and murmurs as it has no rest, filled the groves ; and he heard no other sound. And he prayed that he might hearken to the voice again ; and it fell upon his ears like a string smitten by the winds at a far distance ; and the youth lay upon his face and trembled, for the words of the voice had no meaning to his ears. But while he lay upon the earth, and moaned in his grief, he felt the breathing of a warm air around him ; and when he looked up, lo ! a bright eye was gazing down upon him from the leaves of the tree above his head. And he saw nothing but the eye ; but he straightway knew it for the eye of the voice whose blessed sounds had sunk so deeply into his heart ; and he murmured a fond prayer of thanksgiving for the blessing which had been vouchsafed him, even according to the promise of the voice in his behalf. "Thou shalt not see me, — thou canst not see me, even if thou wouldst and I were willing, — until the scales have fallen from thine eyes, and until thou hast unlearned much which stands in the way of thy knowledge now ; but" — and with glad heart, did he remember the promise of the voice — "when thou givest up thy whole soul in my service, then shall my features come out before thee." And the youth prayed

fervently for the consummation of the blessed promise, for his heart was full of the beauty of the eye which looked down upon him from the cloud, and with the sweetness of that melodious voice which had cheered him and led him on his rightful path. And, even where he stood, did he build an altar to the voice and the eye, and morning and evening did he steal away from the press of the city to offer up his homage to the divine spirit which he so much loved. And the more bright did the eye appear unto his eyes, and the more musical the voice to his heart, so, in the like degree, did the countenance of the goddess worshipped by his people, put on frowns. And he now saw what he had not seen before, that in her face were the shadows of many passions of evil which belonged to men. Was not her eye fixed upon him with hate, and did she not smile upon those whom he well knew to be base and unworthy, as they brought her rich offerings which the hand of violence had despoiled from the weak, and the arts of the cunning had inveigled and taken from the confiding. "And can the goddess be true?" asked Ipsistos of himself, "whose judgments tally not with justice. Shall she smile upon the wrong doer, and share of the spoil which comes of the wrong. Is mere power, which the wild colt hath in his

madness,—a power to destroy,—the sign of the perfect goddess? Shall my heart receive her laws for truth, and grow fond of her smile, when it approves of violence, and the sin that spoils and strikes?” And the voice in his heart answered “No;”—and with free footsteps he hurried away at evening to his lonely worship in the forest; and while he prayed, a halo of light gathered about his brow, and, looking upward, he beheld the perfect face of the benign and blessing spirit which he sought.

XI.

He saw the perfect face, and never did the vision of his dreams, or the imaginings of his hopes, seem half so divine or beautiful. The face looked forth from a cloud, the edges of which were transparent with a golden light; and as the lips opened to speak, the words came forth in visible rays, and the sounds fell upon his heart in melody, and the air blossomed with odor. And the light from her lips fell upon his own, and his soul was lifted into the highest hope, when he heard the tones of his own voice, and felt that they were like hers. And he gave praises aloud to the divine spirit that

looked down upon him, and he spake in song, even in the holy song of the prophets who had perished for the truth. And the voice told him that his song was sweet in her ears, and worthy of her altars. Till the night cloud settled down upon the pale groves where he worshipped, did Ipsistos linger in the place which became so holy to his heart; and wings lifted his feet that night when he returned to the humble dwelling of his father.

Wings lifted his feet, for he had a divine purpose in his heart.

XII.

"What!" he exclaimed, "shall my eyes only look upon this gracious presence? Shall this blessing come to me only? Is there none worthy to share with me this joy,—to partake with me of this glorious truth,—to live with me in the triumph which is promised me, and which must be mine!"

And he mused thus by the hearth of his aged grandsire, and he saw not that the old man slept in his seat. Then came to him Damaina, the best beloved of all his sisters, and she threw herself around his neck, and she said to him,—

"See, our grandsire sleepeth, Ipsistos,—he will fall from his chair,—help me to bear him to his couch."

And in his heart an instant voice cried,—

"Thou art she who shall share with me this blessing,—even thou, my gentlest Damaina; for thy heart is pure, and thy soul loveth the truth, and thou hast reverence for the aged, and clamorest not in the high places with the presumption of ignorance. Thou art worthy of this joy, Damaina. It shall be thine."

And he lifted his sleeping grandsire to his couch of straw, and that night he said nothing to the young maiden. But when the gray dawn had risen to his summits in the east, then did Ipsistos come to the chamber of the maiden, and he cried to her with a persuasive voice, and these were his words,—

"Come forth, Damaina, my beloved. I would have thee go with me. Now, while the day is young, and the hours are blessed with the vigor of a night's repose, go forth with me into the forest. I will show thee some precious flowers, and thine eyes shall behold a loveliness which thou hast never seen before!"

And the maiden came forth with the step that

dances to the music of a gentle heart, and a youthful but pure fancy.

“Whither dost thou lead me, my brother? But I care not whither. I know thy walks must be the loveliest, for well I know how much thou seekest the things which are so. Lead me, then, my brother, — I will joy in the flowers which give thee joy; and my heart shall drink of the same sweets with thine.”

And Ipsistos rejoiced greatly because of the fondness of the maiden.

“If she will love the things which I love,” he mused to his own soul, “she will soon see the glories which delight mine eye.”

And he led her to the pale groves where he worshipped; and he shewed her the simple temple which his hands had built. And he bowed himself before the temple, and he called upon the maiden to do likewise.

“Wherefore, my brother?” asked Damaina.

“It is the temple of the true goddess, my sister. I have beheld her divine presence even among these trees. She will be with me anon.”

But the maiden trembled, and forebore to kneel with her brother, by whose words her soul was confounded.

“What altar is this for the goddess, — what

true goddess is this of whom thou speakest, Ipsistos?"

"She who is truth, — whom the truth alone makes beautiful, — makes strong, — makes immortal."

"Ha ! my brother, — but these words of thine are strange to mine ears. Have we not long worshipped this goddess ? Stands not her white temple upon the high hill that looks down upon the city of our fathers."

"No ! her temple is in the white heart ! It is with you and with me, my sister, if we blind not ourselves wilfully, and refuse not to yield our hearts to the truth. Stay, — hear you not her voice ?"

"I hear nothing, my brother, but a faint murmur as of a wind that sighs among the decaying trees."

"It is her voice ! Kneel with me, dearest sister, and the melody shall sink into your heart."

But Damaina did not then kneel by reason of her great surprise. But Ipsistos knelt, and he prayed with a passionate plea that the sweet voice should fill the ears of the sister whom he loved. And when the maiden heard his prayer, her heart strove within her ; and she mused to herself, and said, —

“Surely this brother loves me, — surely he is wise and good;” — and even while he prayed she sank down on the turf beside him, and her prayers were joined with his. And the sound, which was but a murmur in her ears before, now took a shape of music, — faint at first as the first plainings of the harp troubled by the rising wind, but gathering into fulness at last, and swelling into expression that will not be restrained. The heart of the maiden trembled within her, but it was with a new-born joy, and not with any fear, that it trembled; and she began to love the voice with a love like that of Ipsistos, though, to this time, she had no knowledge of the blessed spirit which he had seen, save by the gentle tones with which she had spoken to her ears. Yet, all the while that she prayed beside her brother, the face was looking down upon them both, though the maiden beheld it not. And the eyes of Ipsistos were opened, and he beheld the form of the true goddess, even as she had promised that he should behold her. And she smiled upon him, so that he felt the wings growing upon his shoulders, but her words were grave in his ears.

“Thy prayer is granted thee, Ipsistos, — thou hast seen me according to the desire of thy heart.

But thy hour is at hand, my son, — thou hast but little time to live.”

And the youth bowed his face to the earth, and his heart spoke in prayer.

“Art thou ready, Ipsistos? The death-angel will demand thee soon.”

And the youth replied sadly, but without faltering, —

“Joy of divine love, I am ready.”

And the lovely image faded away in a sweet smile from his sight, and the music died away among the pale groves; and the two, Ipsistos and Damaina, rose from the place where they had worshipped; and their souls were lifted into thought, so that neither spoke as they took their way, with slow feet, back to the habitation of their father. Yet the words of the voice to Ipsistos came not to the ears of Damaina, neither did his lips reveal to her the doom which awaited him.

XIII.

And towards evening the two went again to the place of their secret worship. But this time they went not in secret. Eyes were upon them that regarded not the object of their devotion, and hearts

were busy to find evil in the things which their hearts desired. The brethren to whom Bermahdi had given it in charge to heed the backslidings of Ipsistos, followed with cautious footsteps upon his path, and beheld the place where he worshipped. And they took heed that he bent himself down before the altar which his own hands had raised, and that he prayed to other than the goddess of the temple. And they hurried to the chief priest with the tidings, and he gave them a rich bounty and much praise for their zeal in his behalf. And he bade them keep secret what they had seen, and seek out more knowledge yet of the doings of Ipsistos. And they were spies set upon their brother, who told the chief priest of his outgoings, and followed him from place to place. But nothing did they say of Damaina, the sweet maiden, who bowed with her brother before the strange altar of his worship. And nothing did Ipsistos know of the doings of his brothers; and he gave little heed to his fears, that counselled him to be cautious in what he did. For the spirit of truth which he worshipped, worked within him, and a fire lighted up his tongue. So that when the elders, and the chiefs, and the rulers of the people, were gathered together in the high places, he could not be kept from speech, and he came to where they were as-

sembled ; and he penetrated into the high places, even among the mighty men of the city, the famous in arts and arms, the sages and the law-givers. And he cried to them with a loud voice, and all fear had utterly gone out of his heart. And he told them of the wonders which his eyes had seen, and his ears had heard, even of the wonders of that new goddess which had vouchsafed to smile upon one so lowly. And he prayed that they might give heed to his counsels, that they might be blessed also by her countenance. And he would have led them to his place of worship, even to the pale groves where he had raised his altar ; but they mocked at his madness, and marvelled at the fondness of the youth.

And they were astounded, and said, one to another —

“ Who is he that speaks to us with so bold a voice — is he not one of the dust-carriers ? — wears he not of the blue which is the cloth of the laborer ? — is he not of the suburbs — the son of the brick-maker ? ”

And they drave him out from among them, and they shut the door against his face.

XIV.

Then, Ipsistos, with a heart sore for his people, went into the market-place, where were gathered together many of his own condition, and to these he cried aloud, and he prayed that they might give ear to his tidings, and he promised to show them strange things. And they were angered when they beheld him on the eminence, and hearkened to the words of his exhortations. And one said—

“Is not this Ipsistos, the son of the brick-maker—and shall one of our own sort claim to be wiser than we?”

And another cried—

“The mortar is even now upon his jacket, yet would he talk for the magi.”

“Where should he get this impudence,” cried a third, “to speak to us in words of counsel? Were we not boys together—have we not often played together on the same hill-side?”

“I know him well; he liveth in our street—he is a fool that dreams—let us stop his mouth.”

Then came one from Bermahdi, the high priest, who whispered in the ear of a huge man whose

anger was greater than the rest, and these were the words of his speech —

“Thrust him down, brother, he is insolent ; — doth he pretend to be wiser than us ? — thrust him down, I tell you ; — it shall be good if we do so.”

Then said another who came from Bermahdi —

“He hath reviled the goddess, whose white temple is upon the hill — thrust him down — let the grass grow in his mouth !”

“Stone him !” cried a third.

And the huge man, whose name was Brassid, lifted a rock and flung it at Ipsistos, and the rock smote the youth upon the ear and sorely wounded him. And Ipsistos fled from the wrath of the multitude ; and he fled, not from fear but from sorrow, as he beheld many among the multitude with whom he had played even when a boy. And he had a purpose in his flight, and he fled towards the pale groves where he had raised the altar. And the multitude pursued him, and they reviled him and stoned him as he fled. But when the youth reached the groves he paused in his flight, and he turned full upon the multitude — and his eye was lifted, and he beheld the goddess whom he worshipped, looking down upon him from the cloud. And the sweet voice spoke in his ears —

“Ipsistos — thy hour is come !”

“Let the hour be blessed by thee, oh! image of divinest joy, and thy servant hath no fears. He is ready.”

And he laid his hands upon the horns of the altar, and he looked out upon the multitude. And he began a song of thanksgiving and of praise, though their voices were bitter with revilings. And they rushed upon him where he stood, and they tore him from the horns of the altar. With a blind fury they set upon him, and the strong men seized each of them a limb. And Brassid was the man who bade them do violence upon him. And they dragged the youth to and fro, and they rent his limbs apart, and scattered them asunder even while the life struggled in his bosom. And when they had done the deed, they were confounded, and knew not what they had done. But Brassid, the strong, who was of a mean craft, he laughed to scorn the confusion of the multitude. And with loud cries he rushed upon the altar which Ipsistos had raised with his own hands, and he would have torn the altar from its place, but a sudden fear seized upon him. For a bright eye looked out upon him from the cloud, with a look of exceeding sorrow; and the sounds of a sad voice came upon his ears like a passing wind; and these were the words of the voice —

“What! ye have slain your master — he who hath wrought for you; and now would you destroy his work? Go! — but come to me at evening.”

And none saw the eye, or heard the voice, but Brassid, and, for a brief time, he was too greatly astonished to speak. And the people would have rushed upon the altar even as he had done, but he stayed their fury:

“Enough! Wherefore should we pull down this pile which is but of wood, and the work of him whom we have destroyed. Let it stand, in token of his folly.”

And he led the multitude back to the city, but the voice went with him.

XV.

And the aged man, the grandsire of Ipsistos, died that night by reason of his exceeding grief; and the house of the brethren was the house of mourning. But Daniaina, the young sister of Ipsistos, she stayed not to join with them in the song of lamentation. Her heart was with Ipsistos, by the lonely altar, among the pale groves of the forest. And though it was a fear of the wrath of the multitude that kept the brethren away from

slain ; but if thou weepest for that deed, shall I not forgive thee, with a heart as tender of mercy as thine own ? Bear witness, oh, beautiful goddess whom my brother loved, bear witness that I forgive this unhappy man, — even from my inmost heart do I forgive him.”

While thus she prayed before the altar, the pale groves were lighted up with a sudden glory ; and the two beheld the bright face, and the lovely features of the goddess, and her words came to them in authority. And she bade the man, even Brassid who slew Ipsistos, draw nigh to the altar, and when he came as he was commanded, and bowed by the side of Damaina, lo ! it was the form of Ipsistos that stood between them, — and the image of the youth smiled sweetly upon him, even upon Brassid his murderer, and his words were these in his ears :

“Thou hast driven me from the work which was assigned me, — it is commanded that thou labor to the fulfilment thereof. Go, therefore, and the smile of the goddess be with thee ; — in my blood shalt thou find a cement which shall build a stronger and a higher temple than the white temple upon the hill.”

And Ipsistos spake nothing to Damaina, but

he looked upon her with a smile of blessing and love, and so passed from her sight.

XVI.

And from that hour a power seemed given unto Brassid to work great things. And he went among the people of his craft in the market place, and he taught them, so that they hearkened with reverence to his voice. And the people came to hear him from all quarters of the city, and after hearing him they went away sad and thoughtful. Day by day, and night by night, without weariness and without fear, did Brassid teach along the highways, of the wonders which he had seen, and the greater wonders which he had heard, and a power was given to him of the goddess, so that whoso came to hear, though it were in scorn only, remained to do homage to the wondrous truths which he brought, and followed him, by reason of this homage, whithersoever he went. And the numbers increased daily of those who followed him. Then did the chief men of the city hold counsel with the priests of the temple upon the hill, how best to overcome this preacher of strange doctrines. And they sent persons against them with

authority to seize and punish. But the multitude rose up in defence of Brassid, even as they had risen against Ipsistos at his summons, and they pelted the servants of the temple with stones, and they ran furiously upon the temple. And they dragged the goddess from her throne, and they drove forth the priests from within it. And Brassid bade them smite the head from the false goddess, and drag her carcass in the dust. And they tore the white temple asunder, so that one stone stood not up against another. And when this had been done, then did Brassid bid them bring the white marble of the temple to the pale groves where Ipsistos had built his altar, and they raised a temple loftier than that upon the hill, and they raised it even over the grave of Ipsistos whom they had slain. And in the temple over against the altar there descended a divine form from heaven, but over the face thereof hung a bright and shining veil; and on the veil was written these words:

“To those, only, who, like Ipsistos, love me ere yet they have known me, my veil shall be uplifted.”

And the people built a high monument to the memory of Ipsistos with the huge stones with which they had slain him; and Brassid wrote the

inscription upon the monument, which was as follows :

“ IPSISTOS !

we, who hated the truth, slew him
because he loved it :

May the truth teach us better knowledge
of our friends, so that we cut not off our own
heads !”

But Damaina, the sister of Ipsistos, beheld nothing of these things. They saw her not after that hour when the goddess had given it in charge to Brassid to complete the labor of Ipsistos. And they raised for her a tomb beside that of her brother, but left open the door thereof, as thinking she might yet come. But to this day she came not.

THE STAR BRETHREN.



THE STAR BRETHREN.

I.

"I WILL come to thee, at midnight, dear Anastasia—with life only will I fail thee."

These were the parting words of the enamored boy; and the tones of his voice, not less than the language which he used, spoke for his deep devotion.

"At midnight, dear Albert," was the reply.

"I live not till then!" said the youth, passionately; "and, if thou meet me not, Anastasia—if thou fail me —"

"Fear me not!" was the low but emphatic interruption of the maiden. "In life or death, dear Albert, I am only thine. I will not fail thee."

The leaves of the grove parted, and by the pale glimmer of evening the two might be seen taking their farewell and fond embrace. She, a tall and



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The leaves of the grove parted, and by the pale glimmer of evening the two might be seen taking their farewell and fond embrace. She, a tall and

slender maiden, lovely as the light, and softer than the new born zephyr ; and he, manly and strong, yet young — having a frame of the most perfect symmetry, and a face full of beauty and expression. A fond, sweet kiss, a parting word and sigh, an earnest and longing glance of rapture — and the lovers separated.

They had not, however, been unseen. The eyes of jealousy were upon them, and the gloomy and fierce Wallenberg — a suitor for the hand of the damsel — had watched them throughout the interview.

“ At midnight !” he muttered, as he saw the youth depart. “ It is well — I will be there also.” And he shook his hand after the departing form of Albert, and his brow was covered with a cloudy anger, which sufficiently denoted the terrible thoughts of his mind, and the malignant feelings which were working in his heart. Yet Wallenberg was a nobleman of high birth, and renowned for deed of valor and great achievement. He was not less so, for his great family estate and wide possessions. These had commended him to the family of Anastasia D’Arlemont, with which he was connected. They all knew him for a coarse, rude, rough-handed nobleman ; yet, as the terrors of his claws were calmed in gold, he was thought

no unfitting match for the gentle and shrinking Anastasia. But she trembled at his approach, and it was with a pang like death that she learned how far his suit had met with the approbation of her parents. Her attachment to Albert was unknown to them, and to have made it known, would, she well knew, avail her nothing. The passionate persuasions of her sanguine lover relieved her from the difficulty before her. He had persuaded her that her only hope was in flight—in flight with him. There was nothing so terrible in that. Would she not have died for him? Could she live without him; and what was life, with such a bear as Count Wallenberg. Albert found but little difficulty in convincing her reason, through the medium of her heart—the medium through which young damsels are most usually convinced. At midnight, then, she was to fly with him. Such were the resolves of the lovers; but Wallenberg resolved otherwise.

Albert of Holstein was even then a student in one of the German universities of the time, the name of which is unnecessary to this narrative. He was, at the period of which we write, just entering his eighteenth year. Until his sixteenth, he had been under the guardianship of a good, but weak and misjudging mother. While yet an in


fant, he had lost his father, who had fallen in a domestic feud with some rival baron, occasioned by a difference of opinion on some matter of great importance or of no importance at all, which had suggested itself to them for discussion, while over their cups. The son—Albert—but for a mind and temper naturally excellent, would have been utterly ruined by the various and misconceived indulgences of his surviving parent. Nature, however, who is not often strong enough for so trying a toil, resisted the mother long enough to save the son from utter ruination; and, when sixteen years of age, he was ready to go to college. After the usual preparation, he was admitted into one of the leading universities, where he soon had occasion to test for himself the propriety of that course to which he had so imprudently been subjected. It is not our object, however, to analyze or dwell upon the impressions of his mind under the new changes of his condition— affecting, as they must have done, the whole structure of his early habits, and pruning and converting, as it were, the dead branches of excess into a new and fresh capacity of life. It is enough to say that he rapidly threw aside the follies of habit and of thought which the error of his mother had engendered. The resources of his own mind—a case not very common—

enabled him to contend with, successfully, and finally to counteract, the thousand mistakes of a foolishly fond parent, and a cringing crowd of domestic parasites.

II.

The night came — a sweet night of many and bright stars — a night for secret, and sacred, and stolen love. But it was not a night for love only. It was a night for hate, also, — for jealousy and murder. There was one who watched for the coming of Albert as anxiously as did the gentle Anastasia ; but it was with not such sweet and fond regard as that which filled her devoted bosom. With the darkness he stole into the silent groves which had been assigned for the meeting, and there waited for the hour and the victim. He had no scruples at any crime — his hand had been often imbrued in blood, which was not always shed in battle — and he was resolved, at every hazard, to remove his rival. He had seen enough in the brief interview which he had witnessed, to feel that, however secure he might be of the preference of the family, he was very far from the hope of a like

preference in the estimation of the maiden, while Albert lived. It was the natural error of a wretch so coarse as Wallenberg, to imagine that he would be more successful when he should have slain the youth. The poor maiden despised him ; though, as he was favored by her parents, she dared not give open expression to her disapprobation and scorn. She was compelled to submit in silence which seemed satisfied. Perhaps, she would not have so readily consented to fly with Albert, but for the tyranny of the union they were about to force upon her. The necessity of the case would seem to justify her fatal resolution. The suit of Albert had been denied, and the language of denial by her parents had been also that of contumely and reproach. There was no hope for her but in flight ; and the preparations of the lovers were secret to all but Wallenberg. As we have seen, his jealous eyes had watched them — his keen ears noted their arrangements, and now, his keener knife was ready to prevent them. This sort of remedy was characteristic of the time. The strong arm carried out the strong word, and justice, which is now a matter of calculation and cunning, was then a thing of muscle and brutality. The murderer lurked in the shadow of the groves, and the lover, impatient for his prize, stole hurriedly through their reces-



ses. His heart was elate with its hope, and his footstep was that of joy. He had almost reached the place assigned for the meeting—a close bower of sweet shrubs in the centre of the garden. But the foe and fate lay in his path, and he was not permitted to reach it. He heard the rustling of the bushes.

“Dearest,—I am here,” he murmured at the sound.

“And I am here!” was the fierce word of Wallenberg, as he plunged the cruel weapon into the bosom of the youth;—“this, boy, for thy presumption.”

The only word uttered by the unhappy lover, was the name of his mistress; and he lay in the sleep of death at the feet of his murderer. Wallenberg stole away in silence when his felon deed was done; satisfied that his own hope grew strong in the annihilation of that of his rival. He knew not the heart of Anastasia.

III.

How slowly passed the hours to the maiden, while she waited for the coming of the youth. From the lattice, long and anxiously had she

looked forth, listening for the dear accents of his whispering voice ; and when the clock tolled forth the full hour of midnight, impatient to behold him, she stole hurriedly down into the garden, treading its flowery mazes, but seeking him every where in vain. Her heart already began to fill with those thousand mysterious fears, and apprehensive forebodings, which are natural enough to a German maiden, when she fancied she heard a sigh. She followed the sound, and something seemed to float in the air before her. A gentle breath moved the leaves overhead, though elsewhere a universal stillness prevailed. The sigh was repeated — the breathing zephyr still guided her from above, and when it ceased to move, the lifeless body of her lover lay at her feet. With a single shriek, scarcely less lifeless than himself, she sank down beside him, and was only aroused to the consciousness of a greater misery by a terrible voice which sounded in her ears.

“ Away with her ! ” cried the furious father, — “ take her home — remove her from my sight.”

She clung to the inanimate form, which could no longer return her fond caresses.

“ You shall not — no ! no ! I will not leave him. I will cling to him to the last.”

But what could her strength avail against that

of the brutal retainers, assisted by the bloody Wallenberg. They tore her from the corpse with unmeasured violence.

"He is yet warm!" shrieked the maiden—"he is not dead—I may yet save him—he will hear my voice. Oh! leave me—leave me with him, I implore you."

"Home with her, I say," were the words of the implacable father, which silenced her entreaties. She shuddered to behold the malignant and savage exultation which were impressed upon his features as he spoke. With the sight, a fearful fancy gathered in her brain. She suspected him—her own father—of the cruel crime, and this suspicion increased her misery. The true assassin, looking on the while, remained unknown. Inquiry in a little time, having labored without success to find the criminal, forbore its task; and if, at any moment, public suspicion rested any where in particular, the object was one quite too high for the arm of public justice.

IV.

Meanwhile, the corpse of Albert was removed to his former lodgings, and from thence to the

family vault in the country. But a strange report — none knew whence — came to the ears of Anastasia. It was whispered that Albert of Holstein was still alive. The story went that a skilful physician and careful hands had kept the spark of life in his bosom, and that hopes were entertained of his final recovery. But these hopes, though they inspired new ones in the heart of Anastasia, were for a long time illusive, and, perhaps, injurious. They kept her mind in a state of feverish inquietude, and prolonged, if they did not increase, the sickness at her heart.

But little time was allowed her, however, for idle meditation upon fancies such as these. Count Wallenberg pressed his suit, and would not be denied. In vain did the maiden plead for time — for a brief indulgence to her sorrows. At that early period in the history of civilization, parents did not often trouble themselves to give ear to the tastes and desires of their daughters. They did not, in the present instance; but with the most cruel disregard to her complaints and prayers, they decreed her to the great bear, her wealthy lover. They doomed her to the sacrifice, and the day was appointed for placing the victim before the altar. We may not speak of the anguish of Anastasia on being instructed to prepare for the nuptials with

Wallenberg. She felt that it would be far easier to die. But, hopeless of any aid from without, and having no succor or show of mercy from within, she prepared to resign herself without struggling to the fate which now seemed inevitable.

It was only a few weeks after the death of her lover, when this scarcely less cruel doom was uttered in her hearing. She fled to her chamber, desperate and desolate. She knew not where to turn for consolation or counsel. It was midnight. She threw herself down before her window, and wished and prayed for death. The very associations of memory, so full of pleasure and joy as the reality had been, now brought her infinite pain. They told her what she had enjoyed, but they also told her what she had lost, and lost for ever. She felt that it would be sweet then to lapse away into forgetfulness, and, fleeing from the pressure and the care of life, rejoin her departed lover in the dwellings of the blessed.

Musing thus, and hopeless of all things and thoughts, she starts and trembles. A sudden terror is upon her. Her blood freezes in her veins — her very heart grows cold. What is it that she hears — what is it that rises up before her sight?


Well may she start and tremble. The faint and exquisite tones of music which now seek her ears are such as she had long been accustomed to hear from the lips of Albert. The words are those of a familiar song, and the tones cannot be mistaken. They breathe of the same sweet passion—they speak the same blessed language. It is Albert's voice and music, and Albert must be at hand. Breathlessly, and half fainting, she lingered and listened to the strains. She did not dare to move—indeed she could not—while she heard them. But soon they melted away in distance, and the winds only remained sighing mournfully through the lattice. Her frame seemed fastened—frozen to the ground; and her terror, becoming insupportable at length, with a shriek she rushed to the innermost recesses of her chamber, and burying her head in the thick drapery of the couch, strove, in this way, to fly and hide from those strange and terrible surmises which were fast gathering in her soul.

But the strange and startling minstrelsy pursued her even there, and its fascinations proved too powerful for her mind to resist. She braved all the terrors of her imagination, in the hope again to hear it. With the approach of the next midnight she again sought the lattice, and listened

impatiently for the returning strains. They came at last, obedient to her senses. The same sweet, mysterious air, rose swelling upon the night wind, and was borne, as it were, directly to the window where she sat. The tones were full of the warmest melancholy — faint, but full — strange, but sweet — mysterious and vague, but as familiar as if they had all been learned in childhood. She was no longer terrified ; and, obeying an impulse which she now found irresistible, and having no fears, she gently undid the lattice, and looked out with far-searching eyes among the trees of the garden. Nor did she look in vain. She beheld a form retreating away among the thick crowding trees, so nearly resembling that of her departed lover, that she involuntarily uttered his name. She was answered by a sigh — so mournful, so deep, that it seemed to reproach her for the indifference of her grief — for her consenting to the bridal sacrifice which had been decreed by her father. Her sorrows burst forth afresh with this thought, and she was convulsed by her emotions. She lost all guidance of her reason at that moment, and called upon Albert deliriously.

Had her voice indeed so much power ? Had the deity spoken from her lips, and was it in truth her lover who now stood before her ? Fair and

manly as when at first she had beheld him, she beheld him now. He looked even lovelier and nobler than ever. No trace of his hurts was perceptible. He was alive, and utterly uninjured. She grew faint as she surveyed him. She trembled with a feeling of awe, lest, at that moment, she should be standing in the presence of a spectre. His eyes, though clear and intelligent as ever, were sad, and full of a solemn expression. They looked the divinity of wo — such an expression as might well belong to a fallen and defeated deity. A mingled feeling of love and adoration, which she stove vainly to restrain, filled and inflamed her heart. How gentle were all his tones — how soothing his words — how tender their utterance. How sweetly did he assure her of his existence — of his continued love for her, even while that existence was doubtful. He had been in deep extremity from his wounds — on the verge of dissolution, from which he had been saved only by the marvellous skill of his physician. The moment of his recovery brought him once more to the feet of her without whom the skill which had saved him would have been rejected. He had risked all danger once more to see her — to hear from her lips that she was not lost to him yet — that she would be none other than his. How easy to give that assu-



rance, — how sweet to receive it. Long did they linger in the sacred and silent garden, in fond communion, with no watcher but the stars, and no thought but of that true and blessing love which they seemed to smile upon and sanction.

But the difficulty of escape from the approaching bridal with Wallenberg distracted the maiden, in the midst of all her new-born hopes and pleasures. She had poured into her lover's bosom all the sorrows which had troubled hers. His composure satisfied and reassured her.

"Fear nothing," he said, "I shall not lose you. I will save you from this hated bridal. You shall be mine, Anastasia — mine only, believe me."

"I do — I do," she repeated, fervently.

"Be ready, then, as I shall counsel you, and fear nothing."

He gave her directions for meeting him, made his own preparations for flight, and with mutual impatience they waited the approaching and appointed evening.

It came — the hour which had been designated for the marriage of Wallenberg. The chapel of D'Arlemont Castle was pompously illuminated — the company were already assembling in crowds, and every thing was gay comparison, amusing scandal, and good-humored clamor. There

were aunts and uncles, cousins and friends — the whole world of various and motley elements which such an occasion so commonly brings together. At the head of a long train of connexions and dependants came the bridegroom, as full of his own consequence as of impatience for the ceremony. The hour was dawning nigh for the sacrifice — but a voice, under the lattice of Anastasia, said to her in a whisper, which, though soft, yet reached her ears —


“Come — come to me, beloved — I await thee, Anastasia !”

A mournful but a sweet voice was his — a voice of melody and love, — and she answered it in like language — “I come.”

She stole away by a private passage into the garden. She joined her lover, and they fled from the boundaries of her father’s domain, long before the assembled company had dreamed of her absence.

V.

“WHERE is she? — where is Anastasia, my bride? — why comes she not?” was the demand of Wallenberg.



Where was she, indeed ? The hour had elapsed — the moment was past — why came she not, in glittering robes, heading, in kindred gladness, the garlanded group of damsels that had gathered to wait upon her ? The castle was soon in commotion, and a strange anxiety filled every countenance. The bridal chamber was empty — the maiden was not to be found. The castle was searched from turret-top to donjon, but in vain. They were compelled to seek her elsewhere. They hunted through grounds and gardens, dispersing every-where, but without success. They next sought the forests. As they penetrated the thick woods, the sky suddenly became dark and overcast — vivid flashes of lightning added to, while illuminating and making perceptible, the gloom. A storm of frightful energy passed over the wood, prostrating every thing before it, and subsiding with equal suddenness. The sky became instantly clear, and the moon shone forth in purity, unconscious of a cloud. The firmament had not a speck. The bewildered groups proceeded in their search. A soft and gentle strain of melody seemed to imbody itself with the winds. They followed the sounds into a dark and gloomy enclosure of high overarching trees, thickly fenced in with knotted vines and brushwood. The thunderbolt

had been there, and it was scorched and blackened. They advanced — the music still leading them onward — until, in a small recess, they found indubitable tokens of the maiden, in the half-consumed remnants of her hat and shawl. They now beheld her destiny. They saw that she had been spirited away by the fiend. She had become the victim of the demon. He had triumphed in the garb of the early and lost lover — and she had fallen a victim, in a moment of sad credulity, to the arts of a designing and an evil angel. They continued the pursuit no longer. She was lost to them for ever — but still not lost. Amid the horrors of the tempest she pursued her way with her lover.

“ Oh, save me, Albert — what a dreadful storm ! ” was her pleading and terrified address, as they hurried on through the devious paths of the forest. The violence of the storm filled her heart with apprehensions. She knew not the fearful extent of her security.

“ I will — fear not, dearest — there is no danger.”

“ It pursues us,” she cried, with increasing terror.

“ It will not harm us — it will soon be over,” was his assurance.

A stream of ground lightning, like a wave of

the sea, rushed up the hill at that moment, and followed close upon their footsteps. The maiden darted forward in desperation — Albert seized her in his arms, and throwing aside her hat and shawl, which encumbered him, he bore her away like an infant. He bore her to the edge of the forest, and laid her down upon the greensward in safety.

VI.

WHEN she recovered from the faintness which had overcome her, the storm had passed away — the night was beautifully clear. The moon had risen, and the gray forests looked sweet and hallowed in her light. A gentle strain of music rose upon the distant breeze, and still more contributed to the soft loveliness and languor of the scene.

The bright eyes of Albert looked down into the dewy orbs of Anastasia, and she thought she never before had seen them look so beautiful. His arm supported her, and she fancied its pressure had never been so fond before. She was blest in that embrace — and fear, and sorrow, and fatigue, departed in the consciousness that she then felt of having all that she lived for, and all that before had been denied her love.

“We must proceed, my Anastasia — our dwelling is not far — we can reach it by the dawn. Our steeds are now in waiting.”

While the moon was yet shining, they stood upon the rocky cliffs which overhung a beautiful river. A proud and lonely castle stood in sight upon the highest crag. The stream glided below it with a pleasant freshness, and rippling away among the shelving rocks, in the placid moonlight, it seemed to the eyes of the happy Anastasia a home of faëry — a very heaven for the heart of truest love.

VII.

THE bird sings falsely who sings only of sunshine. The song must sometimes speak of clouds. Happy were the two — happy in the last degree — in their mutual loves and constant intercourse. Albert was all that Anastasia could desire in a lover — he was fond — he was gentle. His language was kind, always — and his very whispers were musical. But he was melancholy — he was always sad — even when he was most happy. He seemed never to forget the mutability of happiness. Yet his sadness was never gloom, nor did

he at any time complain. Still, the very fact that he asked for no sympathy, and that she knew not how to address herself for his relief — these still made her unhappy. There was yet another cause of disquiet to the fond Anastasia. Their dwelling was so lonesome. True, Albert seldom left her, and there were a thousand pleasant amusements which he had provided; but her heart was too human for such a solitude; and the very winds that mourned in music through the rocky crevices, and the gentle river that rippled sweetly at the castle's base, and the sweet birds that carolled in the groves, and the stars that sang together harmoniously in their courses, all seemed to tell her of the many bright eyes, and cheerful hearts and voices, with which she had been accustomed to mingle. These thoughts gave her some occasional annoyances, but a sweet word from Albert consoled her.

“For a time, dearest, we must keep in solitude, to avoid the search which your father will doubtless institute after you. We must keep in secret — we must avoid all exposure — and here they will not be very apt to seek us.”

She was satisfied — she seemed to be satisfied, at least — and that was something.

VIII.

One night they walked along the edge of the precipice, and looked abroad upon the night and river. The stars were shining in profusion, and not a breath murmured but harmoniously.


"Tell me," he said to her, in a sad but gentle tone, "tell me, Anastasia — do you not tire of our love, and the solitude to which it dooms you?"

"Not of our love, oh, no! dearest Albert, but sometimes I feel so lonesome."

"Yet are you not alone — am I not with you always? With you, dearest, I have no such feeling. You are all to me, Anastasia, and I feel no want when you are absent. Ah! feel like me, I implore you, my beloved. When you repine about your solitude, I mourn — I am unhappy."

"Be not unhappy, Albert — I will repine no longer. I feel that you are all to me, and wherefore should I repine for any change that may lose me all?"

"Wherefore!" he replied — seizing her wrist with a strong gripe as he pronounced the word after her, with a singular energy. "Wherefore!"



indeed? Repine not, dearest, or you may indeed lose all!"

"What mean you, Albert?" she demanded, with some apprehension.

"Look!" he exclaimed; and she beheld, even as he pointed, where a bright star shot away from its sphere in erratic flight, bearing along with it a momentary train of glory, which, as it belonged to, and came from, the sphere alone, was soon extinguished upon leaving it.

"Look," he cried, "look at that star! Be not weary of thy place of watch and quiet, lest thou become extinguished also. Thy sphere and temple are in one heart — thou canst not inhabit many."

He paused, and his eye seemed to trace afar upon its flight the pathway of the vanished star. She looked at him with anxious apprehension. His eye seemed rapt in sorrowful contemplation, and though he shed no tear, the expression was that of a sublime and subdued sadness. She threw her arm tenderly around his neck, and she felt that a thrilling shudder went all through his frame.

"It grows cold — let us return, my beloved," she said to him, fondly.

"Leave me for a while, Anastasia—I will come to thee soon. Leave me now."

His words were gently spoken, but she felt that they were rather a command than a solicitation. She left him at his bidding; but ere she went, she threw her arms again about his neck, and sweet and pure was the kiss given by their mingling lips. She went towards the castle; but, looking backward as she went, it seemed to her that she saw a bright and beautiful star moving across the river to the crag whereon he stood. At length she beheld it remain stationary beside him, and the distinct outline of his person was developed by its rays. She turned away with a strange terror—she dared not look again; but hurried onward with trembling steps to her chamber in the castle.

IX.

It was late that night before Albert came to the chamber, and yet she had not slept. A strange, sweet strain of music, wild, yet fine, came to her ears at midnight, and soon after she heard it, he appeared.

His looks were sad as when she left him—and he did not seem pleased to find her watchful.

"Thou hast not slept, Anastasia?"

"No—I waited for thee, Albert. I can hope for no sleep when thou art absent."

"But sometimes I would have thee sleep, simply because I am absent. Ah, my beloved, would that I might sleep, and sleep for ever, when I can no longer be with thee."

"That music—that sweet music, Albert—whence did it come?"

"Wilt thou not sleep now, my beloved?—I am with thee," was the evasive reply; and Anastasia understood the gentle form of chiding which he had adopted. She obeyed the suggestion—she tried to sleep, and did sleep, but her slumbers were greatly broken—she knew not why; and whenever she awakened it was to hear whispering voices and sudden gusts of music, that seemed to be passing around the apartment with a rush of wings.

X.

It was yet early morning when Anastasia awakened and beheld Albert just about to leave the chamber. She called to him, but he only smiled, shook his head, waved his hand gently, and hur-

ried from her sight. She rose quickly from the couch, and moved to the window, from which she beheld him hastening down the rocks. He looked back and caught her eye, and his finger was raised as if in warning. The thought of the shooting star came that moment to her mind, and she hurried back to her couch.

He returned about mid-day, and seemed unhappy. He started frequently, and looked around him, as if in anxious expectation of the approach of some desired person.

"You are troubled, Albert," said Anastasia.

"Can I do any thing for you?"

"Yes!" was the sudden and almost stern reply.

"See not that I am troubled. When thou canst serve or sooth me, I will seek thee; — when I do not seek thee, Anastasia, believe me, thou canst not serve me. Seem then not to see that I suffer."

"And thou dost suffer, Albert?"

"I live!" was the terrible response; and oh! the immortal grief that looked forth in that moment from his eyes.

"Would that I could die for thee, Albert!" was her exclamation, as she flung herself upon his bosom. He folded her fondly in his embrace, while he replied to her as follows:

"Thou canst better serve me than by dying for

me, Anastasia—and far better serve thyself. Live for me.”

“Do I not, dear Albert?”

“No—not yet—thou dost not live for thyself.”

She looked up wonderingly at the speaker—he proceeded, and his voice was full of solemnity, and there was an intense earnestness in his face which she did not dare a second time to look upon.

“Love thy condition for itself. Seek not to see, and ask not to partake of, mine. Is there any thing unknown to thee?—it is better for thee that thou shouldst not know it. Has it come to thee in a dream that a joy was in the valley awaiting thee, beyond any ever known to thee before? Turn thy footsteps with a fond solicitude from the path which leads to the valley. The dream was a lying one, sent for thy ensnaring. Thou wilt lose what thou hast, in grasping at what thou hast not; and the very hope which tells thee of a blessing to come, steals a blessing from thee while it does so. Beware, Anastasia, that thy head misleads not thy heart, and thy fancy consumes not thy feelings. Do we not love each other, Anastasia? Couldst thou have a fonder or a truer love than mine? Let it suffice thee—joy in what thou hast;—pray to thy God, Anastasia; pray that, if thou dost not

yet, thou mayest soon learn to love thy condition as thyself—it is more than thyself to thee.”

■ He kissed her, and left her with these mysterious lessons, over which she pondered in doubt and sadness.

XI.

The advice of Albert was good, but how unreasonable. How is it possible for man, unless denied to hope, to be content with his condition? How much less possible for woman! To be content with existing things is to desire no change—to hope for nothing better—to live without a thought of heaven. The requisition of Albert sank deep into the mind of Anastasia, but not to produce the effect which he desired. It came to her as a restraint, and not a direction—as a controller, and not a guide. Was he to suffer, and was she to be denied to share with him in his griefs, to console him under his torments? Love itself rose in rebellion against such a requisition. And when she beheld his sadness visibly increase with each successive hour, her fond heart—her sleepless affections—could no longer remain pacified and silent.

“Albert, dear Albert, you do me injustice. I am strong to share with you — ay, to endure all your afflictions. I feel that I love you too well not to rejoice in pain when I know that every added sting to my heart takes from that which is preying upon yours. Unfold to me your griefs — say what afflicts you. Let me hear the worst, and you will see how I can smile to place my hand with yours in the flame, and, looking into your eyes of love the while, feel and fear none of its searching fires.”

It was thus she implored him for his secret — her arms twining about his neck in the fondest embrace — her dark, sweet eyes, looking with the warmest devotion at the same instant into his own.

“You know not what you ask,” was his reply. “You ask for wo — for eternal wo — for a doom for which you were never destined. Why, oh! why will you be dissatisfied? Have you not my love — all my love — my heart, truly and entirely yours? The love of the unselfish and unexacting man — of one who is above meanness or its reproach — is the richest possession ever yet given to the woman heart. Wherefore would you seek for more?”

"You do not give me your heart—you will not give me its sorrows. It is for these I ask."

✱ "You have them, Anastasia—it is only the name you desire to know. You have them already."

"How?"

"Your present care—your anxiety to know them—is your sorrow now. You see that I am grieved—and you grieve to see it. That is enough for me, and should be enough for you. You give me your sympathy when you grieve at my suffering. You prove to me your love for me when you wish to see me glad. I am satisfied with thus much in the way of proof—be you satisfied, dearest Anastasia, with the degree of confidence I have already shown you. Seek not to hear more. I, who know how much you can console, and how greatly you ought of right to suffer with me, deny you any farther knowledge of my griefs than this. I would not have you even see so much. But, at least, I desire that you should seek to know no more."

XII.


Compelled to be silent, she yet remained unsatisfied. A feverish curiosity was gnawing at her

heart. What could be the matter with Albert? Were they not *secure* in their retreat?—was he impatient so soon of the pleasant fetters which love and her fond arms had woven around him? She conjectured, vainly, of a thousand causes for his suffering, dismissing, as idle, each suggestion of her mind, as soon as it presented itself. Her thoughts were sleepless, and they kept her so. That night she heard strange noises in her chamber—strange though slight. She had resolved to keep awake, and yet, even while she strove, it seemed as if a blessed breeze came about her, in a murmuring whisper, that glided into song at length, and filled the air with a slumberous power. She felt the sleep wrapping her still resisting limbs as with a garment of melody, and though she strove to burst its fetters, and her eyes persisted occasionally in looking forth, they were at length compelled to yield the struggle. Yet, ere they closed entirely, it appeared as if a red and lovely light, pointed and raying out like a golden star, wavered and flickered around the couch where she slept, fondly clasped in the arms of Albert. It was not quite dawn when she awakened from that sleep, and then it seemed as if she had been awakened by a cold and sudden wind, which passed over her face while yet in a state of dim and

doubtful consciousness ; she felt the form of Albert, which before had lain quietly beside her, suddenly convulsed as if with spasms ; and when she turned to him and met the glance of his eyes, they were wild beyond description. They glanced sadly, and almost with an expression of gloom upon her, and she felt as if he had repulsed her. But when, under the agony of that thought, she threw her arms around his neck, he returned her embrace with a fondness that answered fully, if it did not exceed, her own.

XIII.

All that day he was absent among the neighboring rocks and woods. She had asked to go forth with him, but he had resolutely, though gently, denied her. Her thoughts, during his absence, were all given, in spite of her will, to the one absorbing subject — the mystery of his sorrows. By a strange instinct, her mind continually reverted to the image of that star, that seemed to cross the river, and station itself close beside him where he stood. A next and natural transition of her thought reviewed the singular sensations which she had experienced just when sinking into slum-



ber, and when awakening the previous night and morning ; and she now remembered, among other circumstances which had attended her sleep, that it had followed soon after the kind kiss which Albert had impressed upon her eyes. The more she meditated this matter, the more perfectly was she convinced that the kiss of Albert had produced that obliviousness which she was so very desirous to avoid ; and, as she was resolute, in spite of all his counsels, to discover what she could of the occasion of his sorrows, she determined, if possible, to escape the repetition of that kiss upon her eyelids when, at a future time, she desired that her eyes might be kept open. It is not difficult for a woman to effect her object when she aims to do wrong ; and it will be seen that Anastasia was only too successful in repressing sleep when her husband desired to impose it on her.

That very night she determined to try her experiments ; and accordingly, as a first step, she aimed to set Albert's mind perfectly at rest as to the degree of quiet which was in hers. When he returned to the castle, which he did at early evening, she received him with the fondest and most satisfying smiles. Her good-humor and cheerfulness, easy but not obtrusive, delighted him, and she now saw the truth of what he had told her.

He was happy as he saw her happy, and his sadness passed away, leaving not the trace of a cloud upon his brow, as, to his eye, she appeared content with her condition. Joyfully — ay, with an intoxication of joy — he clasped her to his bosom, and his words were never fonder, and his kisses never half so sweet. She half resolved, if the appearance of contentment on her part could produce such a vast improvement on his, to make it her study to obey him. Alas! why have we not always the strength to obey good impulses only!

“Be ever thus, my Anastasia — be ever thus, and we are most happy. You will then see no sorrow on my brow, and I will secure you against all that might otherwise assail your heart.”

“I will pray Heaven to be as you wish me, Albert. I have little else to pray for.”

She retired for the night, and he promised to follow her very soon. When she had gone, he clasped his hands, and his eyes looked up in hope to the blessed starlight that came shining through the grated window of the castle. He spoke in low tones of soliloquy as he looked up to the wheeling and flickering fires.

“Let her but continue thus, and I am safe. There will then be no more wanderings — no more flight — no more incertitude. I shall resume my

station—I shall ever more burn with the fixed fires that the winds move not—that the capricious seasons check not—beyond the control of the mortal, beyond the power and caprice of the immortal. Yes, dearest Anastasia, in thy constancy—in thy content—in thy love of thy condition, clamouring for no change-begetting knowledge, I shall be secure, and we shall both be happy.”

It was not long after this that he retired to the chamber of his bride.

XIV.

She had played her part to admiration—she had completely deceived her husband. She little dreamed of the evils which spring from all deception—even where the end seems to be most innocent, and where a superficial thought esteems it praiseworthy. She wished to know his griefs—she persuaded herself because she could then the better administer to and heal them. This was her duty; and so regarding it, she entirely forgot that obedience, in the inferior mind, is a duty also. Albert was perfectly convinced that Anastasia was dissatisfied no longer. That conviction brought back his cheerfulness. His was a pecu-

liar destiny ; and to be thought happy by her, and to make her satisfied with his lot, by perfect happiness in hers, was, according to the terms of that destiny, the condition of his own happiness. Believing and confiding, with renewed and increased fondness, he leaned over her, as she seemed to sleep, and sweet and long was the fond kiss which he pressed upon her parted lips.

She did not sleep—she was watchful. With a pertinacity that did not suffer fatigue or pause, she kept resolutely awake until midnight. Remembering the kiss upon her eyelids which her husband had usually given her, and to which she attributed the deep slumber which always seemed to have followed it, she contrived so to dispose her arms as to throw one of them effectually over her eyes, and thus to prevent the possibility of his lips pressing upon them. She found the position an unpleasant and tiresome one after a little while ; but, bent upon her design, she determined to suffer the annoyance rather than forego her purpose. When a woman once sets her mind upon any thing, it is no small matter which is to divert her from it.

Midnight came at last, to her great satisfaction. She heard the clock of the castle toll forth the hour with a solemn emphasis, and she could scarcely restrain the deep sigh of her heart from forcing

its way to a corresponding sound to her lips. But she did restrain herself, and in a moment after she distinctly felt a cold wind rush through the apartment. At that moment Albert half rose in the couch, and bent over her. She felt his breathing distinctly lift the lighter curls of her hair, and with a keen ear he listened to her respirations. He tried with a gentle finger to detach her arm from its close place over her eyes ; but the arm seemed all at once to have become most obstinately rigid, and he failed in his efforts, in which he did not persevere for fear of awaking her. As if satisfied that she slept, he seemed to turn away ; and the arm, so obstinately immoveable before, was now slightly lifted, without being removed from her eyes, and only sufficiently to enable her to give a single glance around the apartment. As she had seen before, she now distinctly beheld a shadowy outline at the foot of the couch, in whose massive brow a bright pale star shone fixedly and soft. A moment more had elapsed when the form of Albert became suddenly convulsed, and she could scarcely forbear the fond impulse which prompted her to forget every precaution, and clasp him in her arms ; but the secret stirred in her mind at that moment, and she maintained her position and silence, though several convulsions, each successive

one more severe than the preceding, shook his form as with so many dreadful spasms. They were scarcely over when a cold breath of air seemed to pass above her neck, and she distinctly felt the body of Albert sink down helplessly beside her. Her heart beat impetuously — she could scarce suppress her breathing, and nothing but the most resolute determination enabled her to forbear shrieking aloud. She did forbear, however; and once more venturing to look forth, she now distinctly beheld two shadowy forms glide through the apartment, with each a red and similar star shining brightly upon his forehead.

XV.

Anastasia could bear this no longer, particularly when, turning to the side of the couch where Albert lay, his body was cold, corpse-like, and immoveable. Conviction forced itself upon her — the secret was discovered, and the burden was insupportable. She shrieked aloud in her agony; she clasped the lifeless body in her arms, while her eyes, addressing the star-fronted shadows that stood at the foot of the bed, seemed to appeal to them once more for the restoration of the inanimate form

beside her. With the first accents of that wild and fearful shriek, indicating, as it did, the sudden and startling intelligence which her mind had received, a visible effect was produced upon the strange aspects before her. While she looked, she beheld one of the stars rise slowly, and sail away without obstruction through the spacious windows, while the other wavered and flickered about as if in the gusts of an uprising storm. A storm, indeed, seemed to rage through the apartment. The shadowy figure appeared to expand into a rolling and tossing cloud, in the midst of which, as if it were the centre of its action, the bright star now grew more bright, and of a deeper red, and shot forth the most angry fires on every side. Nothing could exceed the terrors of Anastasia. The star seemed now to approach her, and gust after gust, like the rushing of so many heavy wings, passed and repassed over the couch where she lay, lifting and rending its silken drapery. She cried aloud once more in her apprehension.

“Forgive, forgive me, dearest Albert — forgive me that I have offended. Come to me — be as thou wert — I will obey thee — I will never offend thee more.”

“Too late — too late,” cried a voice of sorrow rather than of anger from the bosom of the cloud,

which now hung, like a dense wreath of vapour, just above the couch where she lay.

"It is too late, dearest Anastasia — I can return to thee no more."

"Wherefore — wherefore?" was the interrogation of the terrified woman.

"It is the doom!" was the hollow answer from the cloud; and the star that still shone from the vague form before her seemed to shed drops of blood, that fell even upon the garments of her couch, as the mournful voice thus responded to her inquiry.

"Alas! alas! wherefore is this doom!" she cried once more to the shadow and the star.

"Thou hast already asked too much. I warned thee, my Anastasia. Was it not enough to know that thou wert happy? Why wast thou not satisfied with thy condition? Thou hast destroyed the hope and the happiness of both by thy impatient thirst after the why and the wherefore."

"Alas! and for this are we to be disunited, my Albert — for so slight a cause as this are we to lose the blessing we have lived for?"

He replied to her in an allegory.

"Does the flower please thee? — wherefore destroy it to know whence come the scent and the beauty? The odor flies when thou dost so — and

the beauty fades. This is life — this, always, the happiness of the mortal. But thou art mortal no longer, my Anastasia — thou art now destined to share, even as thou desiredst it, the terrible doom which is mine !”

“What meanest thou, Albert ?” she inquired, tremblingly, as these fearful words reached her ears.

“Albert no longer,” cried the star. “Thy lover was a god !”

She sank from the couch where she had lain as she heard these words, and she now lay extended along the floor.

“Rise, Anastasia, still beloved, though mine no longer — rise,” said the star, “and I will tell thee what is given to thee to know.”

She rose — she stood tremblingly in the presence of that fiery eye that looked down upon her, while the cloud in which it was imbedded hung over her like a protecting and mighty shield. How glorious, how fearful, were the words which followed.

XVI.

“When I bade thee regard the flight from heaven of a lovely star but a few nights ago,

Anastasia, I called thee to witness my own fate. That star was a kindred light with mine, seduced by me, as I had been seduced, from the sweet and beautiful abode where it shone, happy and adored, on high. I had my abode beside it, and was the worshipped deity of a mighty nation. No eye brighter than mine looked forth from the eastern summits—no more pure or peaceful planet gave light to the returning shepherds. Like the star whose flight I pointed out to thy regard, I fell from my place of glory, and the secret of my fall was in the commission of thy error. I was discontented with my condition.”

The spirit-lover paused, and the hapless Anastasia wrung her hands in hopeless misery. He proceeded—

“For ages, before the birth of time, had that lovely abiding-place been the assigned station from which I shone. Millions of lovely spirits shone and revolved around me, with a light partly borrowed from mine; but oh! how unapproachably inferior to me. I was beloved—I was worshipped; but, like thee, Anastasia, I knew not to be content in my place, and incurred, in a hapless moment, a doom not unlike, but far more terrible than thine.”

The maiden moaned upon the floor of the apart-

ment, but without the utterance of a single word. At that moment a pale star sailed along by the window, and from the dim cloud, of which it was the centre, she heard a voice crying mournfully—

“Come !”

Albert replied with a promise of compliance, and the spectre-glory floated away in the distance from her sight. He proceeded in his narration :

“One night—one fatal night—looking down from my place of watch, I beheld, in undisturbed quiet and loveliness, the various and the wondrous worlds around me. A pale form passed hurriedly along upon one planet, the earth, and it waved its hands, and it shrieked in agony, and its cries of sorrow came to my ears, even afar off as was my dwelling. Thine was that form, Anastasia—thou wert the mourner.”

“Alas ! alas !” cried the hapless woman—but she could exclaim nothing farther.

“Thine was the form, and such was the agony of thy piercing shriek, that inly I mourned for thee—I deemed it a cruel injustice that such as thou shouldst suffer. Thou wert so lovely and so sorrowful, and the sweetest loves in the thoughts of the blessed, are those which are most allied to sadness.”

With these words the spirit paused in his narra-

tion, and the cloud in which the eye hung and shone now veered away and approached one of the windows of the apartment. At the same time, many stars, floating in like forms, came before the window, and strange words passed between Albert and the rest, in tones of the most sweet but subdued and melancholy music. In a few moments they floated away like the last, and her companion again approached and hung above her in the apartment. He continued his narration:—

“ With the thought and the desire which came to me as I surveyed thee, Anastasia, a dim and giant form came rushing towards me, from the piled clouds that lay like so many rocks and towers in the northern horizon. His speed was like that of the lightning; and he made his way among the stars around me, obscuring their lustre, and scorning their obstruction, with the rapid rush of a mighty tempest. When he approached me, he lay suspended on his outstretched wings, the curtain of which clouded the earth and concealed it that moment from my sight, and he gazed upon me with an air of sorrowful pride, mixed with the most mortifying expression of contempt. ‘I have heard thy wish,’ he cried — ‘thou canst dare to regret, but not to repair. Thou canst see, but thou hast not the courage to share the suffering which thou

seest. Truly, thou art a generous spirit — noble in the estimation of the highest, and worthy of the fixed place which thou holdest.' Such were his words of scorn, and they touched my pride. 'And what better fortune is thine, dark spirit?' I replied to the intruder. 'What hast thou to boast beyond me—in what is thy better portion?' He answered readily, and his voice went through me with a strange and mighty power, so that I trembled in the sphere in which I had never before been shaken.

" 'I am free,' was his fierce and proud reply. 'I am free.'

" I heard his words with a throbbing and speechless admiration, and began to feel a fond desire that I too might be free. I little knew then the nature of the blessing which I sought. I little thought that, to be free, I should for ever after be alone !

" But I was not yet free, and I replied to him still as the appointed servant of my master: 'My state is glorious — my home is one of lights, and love, and perpetual flowers; and my duty is only to watch for the Mighty One.' He replied in greater scorn —

" 'Thy home is one of lights — true — but they are spies which are set upon thee to report


when thou errest — the love which is given thee is not given for thyself, but for thy service — and the flowers of which thou art mad to boast — look, fool, they are woven into chains. Thou art a slave but to spy upon others — thou art spied upon thyself, and held worthy of love only as thou dost the appointed task of the menial.'

"He had spoken to me a dreadful truth — so I deemed it at the time, and in my thoughts I wished myself free — free as the fierce and mighty form that lay prone like a fearless giant, proud and scornful in his might, before my eyes. I wished for freedom, and with the wish I felt the golden link melt away that secured me in my station — the bands of flowers, which like a chain had held me with a spell which no foreign power or agency could have broken, now, at my single wish, were relaxed from about me, and a mighty and clear voice from a world a thousand worlds above me, came to me like the sudden sound of a trumpet —

" 'Thou art free!'

XVII.

"Dreadful freedom! That instant I felt myself alone. I was detached from the sphere in which



I had borne so small a labour, and enjoyed such a high and worshipped glory, and I floated away into a thousand regions, and journeyed with the mighty spectre which had seduced me to his sorrows and my own shame. But ere I had utterly left the sphere in which I had dwelt so happily and so long, I heard the sad lament of my companion stars, stronger, yet more humble in station than myself, whom I had left behind me. It was a strain which told me my destiny, and shaped out my only future hope, as it detailed my own duty to myself and to the mighty master.

“CHORUS OF THE STAR BRETHREN:”

I.

“Wo to us and to thee,
Star most beloved —
Thy world and ours
Tumbles, and falls abroad —
Thou, in thy weakness,
Brother, most erring —
Thou, in thy loneliness,
Thou hast destroy'd it !

II.

“They bear away —
They the dark spirits

* Imitated from a chorus of spirits in the “Faust” of Goethe

Whose pleasure is ruin ! —
They bear away
The hope and the harmony
Wreck'd into nothingness !
While we weep over
The beauty that's lost !

III.

“Mighty among the stars,
Bright one, rebuild it !
In thy own bosom
Rebuild it again !
Begin a new being
With spirit unshaken,
Then shall new music
Unite the now sunder'd !”

“Such was the mournful anthem which my brethren sang in sorrow at my departure and fall, and whose strains followed me afar, and still follow me. I hear them now ; and thou too, dearest Anastasia, with whom I had commenced that new being, and through whose beloved agency I had hoped for my restoration, with thee beside me, partaking my immortality and glory in that high place — thou too mayst hear them now.”

And she did hear, for a gust of the breeze, that seemed full of perfume, floated that moment by the window, and her ears distinctly noted the last words of the melancholy and imploring anthem : —

“ Mighty among the stars,
Bright one rebuild it!
In thy own bosom
Rebuild it again!
Begin a new being
With spirit unshaken,
Then shall new music
Unite the now sunder'd!”

“ I had commenced that new being with thee, my Anastasia, and hoped to have succeeded in my labours ; but the very danger which I feared, and against which I strove to counsel thee, has wrecked the fond hope within my bosom, and now drives me forth once more, alone, to commence my toils anew. Thou wast not content with thy condition or with mine — thou hast committed mine own error.”

“ And is there no forgiveness, Albert? — let me but be tried once more, my beloved — ”

“ Thou shalt be tried, Anastasia — this is thy doom, no less than mine. Thou hast striven to know — it is now thy destiny — thou art now doomed to partake of mine.”

“ Ah ! happy — happy shall I be, Albert, if so permitted.”

“ Alas ! Anastasia, thou knowest not what it is — thou canst not dream of its terrors,” was the mournful answer of the spirit to the fond assuran-

ces of the devoted woman. "Thou deemest that, to share my destiny, thou wilt still remain with me."

"And will it not be so, my Albert?"

"Alas! no!" was the sad reply. "It is my doom of loneliness which thou art to share — my doom of isolation. Thou wilt not go with me, nor I with thee, yet we must both go forth. Thou hast to seek, as well as myself, for that condition among the mortal which is borne without repining, and with no desire of change. Make thyself kindred to such a spirit, and thou livest with me when I rejoin the stars."

She lay shrieking at the foot of the cloud, which now slowly descended, and seemed to encircle her.

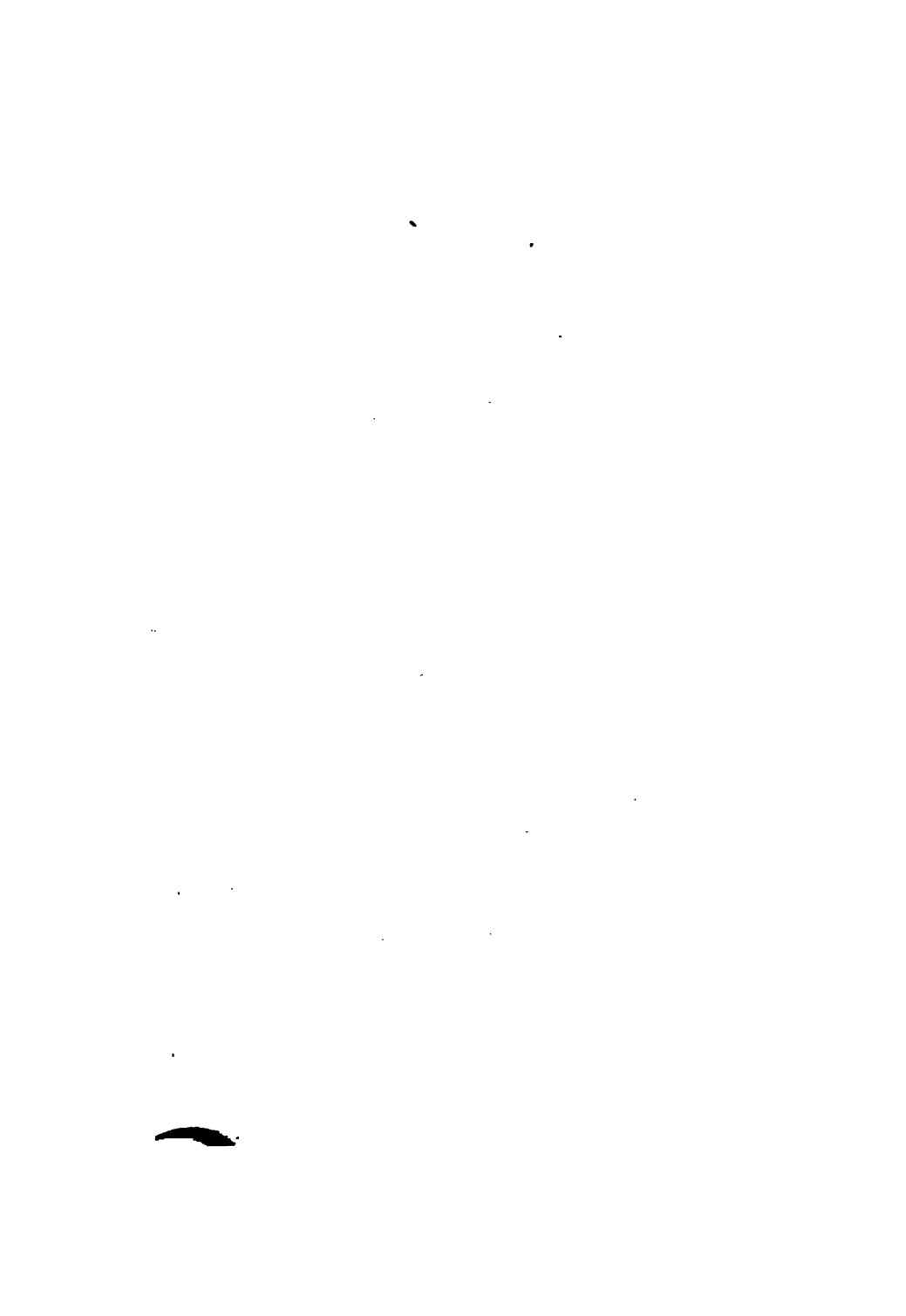
"Come!" exclaimed a sober and sad, yet soft accent, at the window; and there, in her sight, floated once more the kindred star which had followed her lover; she felt herself lifted from the ground, and enveloped in a fold of the softest and the sweetest air, while the bright eye of Albert, starlike and pure, came close to her forehead.

"What wouldst thou?" demanded Anastasia, in her bewilderment.

"Impress upon thee my immortality with my doom," was the answer; and that moment she felt the star pressing like ice upon her forehead.

It seemed to sink, cold and chilling, into her very brain, and she shrieked with the momentary agony of that feeling. In another instant she was released from his embrace, and, whirling round with a motion not her own, she now found herself wrapped in an airy mantle like that of her companion, and she was conscious, while floating away—away into the fathomless abysses of the air—that she shone from the centre of a cloud like the star which had personified her lover. Her next feeling was that of utter isolation. She beheld the beautiful star, which she had loved as a mortal, sailing along, with a slow and steady light, above the rocks and the river, and she strove to follow and rejoin it. But a power restrained her movements and checked her will, and she now felt herself borne unresistingly in an opposite direction. Then, for the first time, did she feel the horrible nature of that destiny which she had so passionately desired to share with him. The fearful truth which he had uttered came like a knell of agony to her suffering soul, as she felt and feared, in that desolate moment, that she was destined for ever after to remain alone!

ONEA AND ANYTA.



ONEA AND ANYTA.

I.

THE Yemassee was no longer the great nation. They had set their fortunes upon a cast, and the throw was fatal. Civilization triumphed. The Carolinians, in spite of the sudden massacres under which they had suffered at the beginning of the war, were at length successful; and at Coosawhatchie, or the "town of refuge," the Yemassees lost their best leaders. With these, they lost all spirit, and their surviving warriors were unequal to the task of restoring their fortunes. Scattered and without counsel, they yet fled, as if by a common instinct, to their sacred town of Pocotaligo, where, in the presence of their priests and the protection of their gods, they had faint hopes yet of effecting by prayers and superstitious ceremonies, what, hitherto, their own fearless valor had utterly

failed to accomplish. Their resources were now nearly exhausted — their villages in flames ; and relying as they had done, upon the hope of obtaining possession of the chief city and provisions of the whites, their fields had, in the greater number of cases, been left without cultivation. Their Spanish allies, always deceitful, after stimulating them to war, had left them to contend with it single handed. On hearing of the defeat and slaughter of the Yemassee, such of them as had been sent from St. Augustine to their succor, returned to the shelter of its walls, under the influence of a sudden panic. The neighboring Indian tribes followed the base example, and either returned to their forests, or made concessions, and bound themselves by treaty to the conquerors, giving hostages for their future good behavior. Not so with the unhappy Yemassee. They were still too proud to beg for that peace, which they yet needed more than all, and which alone could save them from extermination. They were too brave to desire peace when their slain brothers remained unavenged. They resolved, therefore, to carry on the struggle to the last ; and, crowding into the holy town of Pocotaligo, they proceeded to strengthen themselves in their position, as well as they might, there to await the approach of the Carolinians.

They fortified the town, somewhat after the fashion of the European settlers, with the trunks of trees and the larger branches, rudely bedded together. This done, divided between hopes and fears, they passed the brief time which elapsed between their preparations and the assault. They had not long to wait. Their defences, which, manned by Europeans, and against savages, might have proved adequate to their purposes, proved no barrier against the pursuer. The impetuous onset of their sanguine assailants could not be withstood by those, made already apprehensive by previous experience, of the result; and their frail bulwarks were stormed, and Pocota-ligo in flames, in the same fearful hour of assault. The scene was terrible; but, though despairing, the Indians did not think of flight. The men fell, and the women filled their places. A dreadful massacre ensued: naked and howling, but tearing and rending as they ran, men, women, and children, darted to and from the blazing dwellings, shrieking for that revenge which they could obtain in part only. They neither gave nor asked for quarter; and in the darkness of night and the confusion of the scene, they were enabled to protract the conflict with the success which must always follow courage, and the valor of men fighting fearlessly for their homes. Through the night the

battle lasted, but as soon as the day broke upon them, the struggle was over. The first glimpses of the morning found the bayonet at the heart of the few surviving warriors, who still lived, but only at the mercy of those to whom in all their successes they had shown no mercy. But few of them escaped. Before sunrise, the fight was ended, and the great nation of the Yemassee was stricken from existence.

II.

On the eastern banks of the Isundiga, or Savannah river, there is a lofty tumulus, which the insidious waters of the stream have long since begun to undermine. On the summit of this tumulus, the morning after the termination of this fatal combat, stood a Yemassee warrior. The blood upon his visage—his torn garments and broken instruments of war, sufficiently testified to the recent strifes in which he had been engaged. It was Echotee, a valiant chief, who stood upon the tumulus. His limbs were weary with toil and flight—his eye was dim, and the melancholy sadness of the Indian mouth was heightened into hate and anguish. He busied himself in fitting new

sinews to his bow, and sharp flint heads to his arrows. The hunting shirt which he wore—a finely dressed buckskin of the brightest yellow, fantastically inwrought with shells and beads—such decorations as the tasteful woman, Hiwassee, his wife, had fondly chosen for the purpose—was torn in many places, and spots of the darkest red were contrasted with the bright yellow of the garment. Wounded, lone, and sorrowing, yet Echotee did not despair. His eye had exile in it, but not fear; neither did he despond. Firmness and manly resolution shared with sorrow the habitations of his soul. Anxiously, at moments, he looked towards the forests behind him, as if in expectation; but their dark intricacies uttered no sound or voice, and he turned his eyes away in disappointment. Then, after a brief pause, taking his way down from the tumulus, he moved to a little streamlet that trickled at the foot of the mound, and passing partially through it, at length made its way to the bosom of the Isundiga. Stooping to the stream, he drank freely of its waters; then, returning hastily to the mound, he proceeded, with a slender shingle, with which he had provided himself, to dig an opening in the hillock, as if contemplating a place of sepulture. While he dug, he sang in a

low but unsubdued tone, a chant, in which he lamented the fortunes of his fellows :—

“ They are gone, and the night covers them. My feet have no companion in the chase—the hollow woods speak to me with the voices of shadows—there is no life in their sounds. Where art thou, Washattee—where speedest thou, whom none yet has overtaken. On the far hills that rise blue at the evening I see thee—thou hast found the valley of joy, and the plum-groves that are ever in bloom. But who, brother, shall gather thy bones—who take care of thy spirit—where shall the children look, when they seek for thy grave. Thou art all untended in the green valleys, and the ghosts of the slain bend over thee with many frowns. Comes she, the maid of thy bosom, to dress the board of the hunter? Brings she at evening thy venison? When the night is dark, and the brown vulture stoops on thy path, and snuffs up blood of thy spilling, I fear for thee, my brother. Thou canst not sit in the green valley, for the warrior lives who has slain thee, and mine arrow may reach him not. Yet will I sing for thee, Washattee—I will sing for thee thy death-song, and tell the ghosts who frown, of thy many victories; thou wert mighty in the chase—the high hills did not overcome thee. Thy boyhood was like the manhood of

other men—thou didst not creep in thy childhood. From the first, thy feet were strong to walk, and what speed of the warrior was like unto thine? Well did they call thee the young panther—the eye and the might of the young panther's mother was thine. The strong tide, when thou swammest, bore thee not back—thou didst put it by like an infant. In the chase, thou wert an arrow which laughs at the bird's wing—in the battle, thou wert a keen tooth that goes deep in the heart. Thus said the Muscoghee, when his eyes swam in the cloud as he lay under thy knee—thus said the Catawba, when thy hand struck through the long willows by the lake of Sarattay. The ghosts of the Muscoghee and the Catawba shall wait for thy coming, and meet thee to serve, when thine eye opens upon the green valley, and thy shadow darts forward on the silent chase. But thou, oh Yemassee—thou of the broad arrow and the big wing—it is sad for thee when none but Echotee may stand up for thy people. Thy wing is down among the reeds that lie beside the river—thy broad arrow is broken on the plain. Thy shadow grows small upon thy tumulus, and I speak thy name in a whisper. Opitchi-manneyto looks on thee in wrath. He joyed in the last cry of Sanutee—he joyed when the death-song came thick

from the lips of Chigilli — he joyed when the pale faces cut the sinews in thy thousand arms. Who shall sing thy greatness, Yemassee — what warrior to come after? What woman with long hair shall creep through the forest, looking in the evening for thy scattered bones? Who shall scare the wolf from thy carcass, as he tears thy flesh beneath the moon. The fox burrows under the hearth of the hunter, and there is no fire to drive him away. Silence lives lonely in thy dwelling. Thou art gone. Spirit of many ages! thy voice is sunk into a whisper; and thy name, it is an echo on the hill tops. Thy glories are the graves of many enemies, but thy own grave is unknown."

The death-chant of the warrior was broken. A sudden cry of sorrow reached his ears from the neighboring woods, and was immediately succeeded by the appearance of about thirty other Indians, of both sexes, emerging from the shadowy umbrage. These were all that were left of his nation. Echotee looked on them for an instant with sudden interest, but his eyes were again as instantly dropped upon the ground, and his hands continued to labor upon the grave which he had begun. Meanwhile the Indians advanced, bearing along with them, from the woods, the dead body of a warrior. This was Washattee, the warrior

whose death-song had been just sung by his brother. Beside this, Echotee gave no other sign of sorrow. No trace of that grief which might be supposed natural to his uttered lamentations, was visible in his action or face. His words seemed to fall from lips of marble. His was the majesty of wo, without its weakness.

Washattee had fled with the few survivors from the fatal field of Pocota-ligo ; but his wounds were fatal, and he only fled from a quick to a protracted form of death. He perished in the forests when no longer in danger from the pursuing foe. They were now to bury him. The ceremonies of burial among the savages are usually simple. The warriors, as they assisted to deposit their comrade in the grave, chanted over him a song, not unlike that which has already been recited. They enumerated his victories over the Catawba, the Muscoghee, and other nations — his particular successes in the chase ; and their only and common regret was, that his death had not been avenged in the blood of the victor. While they sang, Echotee, who remained silent all the while, placed beside him, in the grave, his bow, his arrows, knife, pipe, and a plentiful supply of flint arrow-heads, to meet the emergencies of the chase in the shady vallies, to which, according to their faith, his steps were

already bending. This done, and the soft mould heaped upon him, after a brief consultation, they stepped one by one into the order of march known as the Indian file, making but one footstep for the eyes of the pursuer, and followed, at equal distances, the guidance of the brave Echotee. By the side of the latter, came, in tears, the young and beautiful Hiwassee, the maiden who, but a little time before, had broken with him the wand of marriage—the sacred wand of Checkamoysee. To the deeper western forests they bent their way, and the shadows of evening soon sank behind them like a wall, separating them forever from their native homes.

III.

Many years had now elapsed, and men ceased to remember the once noble nation of the Yemassee — once the most terrible and accomplished people of the southern forests. They had even gone out of the memories of their ancient enemies, the Creeks ; and the Carolinians, while in the full enjoyment of the fertile lands which had been their heritage, had almost entirely forgotten the hard toils and fearful perils by which they had been ac-

quired. It was in the morning of a bright day in October, that a small Indian canoe might have been seen ascending the river St. Mary, up to its source in the Okeefaukee swamp, a dismal region, which lies between the Ockmulgee and Flint rivers, in the state of Georgia.

There were but two persons in the canoe, both Indian hunters of the Creek nation; a gallant race, well known for high courage among the tribes, and distinguished not less by their wild magnanimity and adventure, than by their daring ferocity. The warriors were both young, and were numbered, and with strict justice, among the *élite* of their people. At peace, for the first time for many seasons, with all around them, they gave themselves up to the pleasures of the chase, and sought, in the hardy trials of the hunt for the bear and the buffalo, to relieve the inglorious and unwelcome ease which this novel condition of things had imposed upon them. Our two adventurers, forsaking the beaten track, and with a spirit tending something more than customary to that which distinguishes civilization, had undertaken an exploring expedition into the recesses of this vast lake and marsh, which, occupying a space of nearly three hundred miles in extent, and in very rainy seasons almost completely inundated, presented,

amidst the thousand islands which its bosom conceals, fruitful and inviting materials for inquiry and adventure. Girt in with interminable forests, the space of which was completely filled up with umbrageous vines and a thick underwood, the trial was one of no little peril, and called for the exercise of stout heart, strong hand, and a world of fortitude and patience. It was also the abiding-place of the wild boar and the panther—the southern crocodile howled nightly in its recesses—and the coiled snake, ever and anon, thrust out its venomous fangs from the verdant bush. With words of cheer and mutual encouragement, the young hunters made their way. They were well armed and prepared for all chances; and fondly did they anticipate the delight which they would entertain, on relating their numerous adventures and achievements, by field and flood, to the assembled nation, on the return of the ensuing spring. They took with them no unnecessary incumbrances. The well tempered bow, the chosen and barbed arrows, the curved knife, suited to a transition the most abrupt, from the scalping of the enemy to the carving of the repast, and the hatchet, fitted to the adroit hand of the hunter, and ready at his back for all emergencies, were the principal accoutrements of the warriors. They troubled

themselves not much about provisions. A little parched corn supplied all wants, and the dried venison in their pouches was a luxury, taken on occasion only. They knew that, for an Indian, the woods had always a pregnant store ; and they did not doubt that their own address, in such matters, would at all times enable them to come at it.

Dreary, indeed, was their progress. An European would have despaired entirely, and given up what must have appeared, not merely a visionary and hopeless, but a desperate and dangerous pursuit. But the determination of an Indian, once made, is unchangeable. His mind clothes itself in a seemingly habitual stubbornness, and he is inflexible and unyielding. Though young, scarcely arrived at manhood, our warriors were too well taught in the national philosophy, to have done any thing half so womanlike as to turn their backs upon an adventure, devised coolly, and commenced with all due preparation. They resolutely pursued their way, unfearing, unswerving, unshrinking. The river narrowed at length into hundreds of diverging rivulets, and, after having run their canoe upon the sands, they were compelled to desert it, and pursue their farther way on foot. They did not pause, but entered at once upon the new labor ; and now climbing from tree to bank — now wading

along the haunts of the plunging alligator, through pond and mire—now hewing with their hatchets a pathway through the thickest branches, they found enough to retard, but nothing to deter them. For days did they pursue this species of toil, passing from island to island—alternately wading and swimming—until at length, all unexpectedly, the prospect opened in strange brightness and beauty before them. They came to a broad and lovely lake, surrounded on all sides by the forest, through a portion of which they had passed with so much difficulty, and to which the storms never came. It lay sleeping before them with the calm of an infant, and sheltered by the wood, the wild vine, and a thousand flowers. In the centre rose a beautiful island, whose shores were crowned with trees bearing all species of fruit, and emitting a most grateful fragrance. The land was elevated and inviting, and, as they looked, the young warriors conceived it the most blissful and lovely spot of earth. Afar in the distance, they beheld the white habitations of the people of the strangeland, but in vain did they endeavor to reach them. They did not seek to adventure into the broad and otherwise inviting waters; for occasionally they could behold the crocodiles, of the largest and fiercest class, rising to the surface, and seeming to

threaten them with their unclasped jaws, thickly studded with their white sharp teeth. While in this difficulty, they beheld a young maiden waving them on the opposite bank ; and Onea, the youngest of the two hunters, attracted by the incomparable beauty of her person, would have leapt without scruple into the lake, and swam to the side on which she stood, but that his more grave and cautious companion, Hillaby, restrained him. They observed her motions, and perceived that she directed their attention to some object in the distance. Following her direction, they found a small canoe tied to a tree, and sheltered in a little bay. Into this they entered fearlessly, and putting out their paddles, passed in a short time to the opposite shore, the beauty of which, now that they had reached it, was even more surpassingly great than when seen afar off. Nor did the young Indian maiden, in the eye of the brave Onea, lose any of those charms, the influence of which had already penetrated his inmost spirit. But now she stood not alone. A bright young maiden like herself appeared beside her, and, taking the warriors by the hand, they sung sweet songs of pleasure in their ears, and brought them the milk of the cocoa to refresh them, and plucked for them many of the rich and delightful fruits which hung over their

heads. There were oranges and dates, and cakes made of corn and sugar, baked with their own hands, which they cordially set before them. Many were the sweet glances and precious sentences which they gave to the young warriors, and soon did the gallant Creeks understand, and gladly did they respond to their kindness. Long would they have lingered with these maidens, but, when their repast had ended, they enjoined them to begone—to fly as quickly as possible, for that their people were cruel to strangers, and the men of their nation would certainly destroy them with savage tortures, were they to return from the distant chase upon which they had gone, and find the intruders. “But will they not give you,” said the fearless Onea, “to be the bride of a brave warrior? I shame not to speak the name of my nation. They are men, and they beg not for life. I, myself, am a man among my people, who are all men. They will give you to fill my wigwam. I will do battle for you, Anyta, with the knife and the bow; I will win you by the strong arm, if the strange warriors stand in the path.” “Alas,” said the young girl, “you know not my people. They are tall like the pine trees, which rise above other trees; they look down upon your tribe as the prairie grass that the buffalo tramples down, and the

flames wither. The sun is their father — the earth their mother — and we are called the daughters of the sun. They would dash you into the flames, if you told them of a lodge in the Creek wigwam for a maiden of our tribe.”

“The Creek is a warrior and a chief, Anyta, and he will not die like a woman. He can pluck out the heart of his foe while he begs upon the ground. I fear not for your people’s anger, but I love the young maid of the bright eye and sunny face, and would take her as a singing-bird into the lodge of a great warrior. I will stay in your cabin till the warriors come back from the hunt. I am no fox to burrow in the hill side.”

“You will stay to see me perish, then, Onea,” said the girl — a gleam of melancholy shining from her large dark eyes — “for my people will not let me live, when I speak for your life.”

“See you not my bow and arrows, Anyta? Is not the tomahawk at my shoulder? Look, my knife is keen — the sapling may speak.”

“Your arm is strong, and your heart true, you would say to Anyta; but what is one arm, and what are thy weapons, to a thousand? You must not linger, Onea; we will put forth in the little canoe. I will steer to a quiet hollow, and when thou art

in safety I will leave thee, and return to thee again."

IV.

It was with difficulty the hot-headed Onea was persuaded to comply with the suggestions of prudence, and nothing but a consideration for the safety of the maiden had power to restrain his impetuosity. But, assured that, in the unequal contest of which she spoke, his own individual zeal and valor would prove unavailing, he submitted, though with evident ill grace, to her directions. A like scene had, in the meanwhile, taken place between Hillaby and Henamarsa, Anyta's lovely companion, which was attended with pretty nearly the same results. A mutual understanding had the effect of providing for the two warriors in the same manner. Entering once more the canoe in company with, and under the guidance of their mistresses, they took their way down the lake, until they lost sight of the island on which they had first met. They kept on, until, far away from the main route to the habitations of the tribe, they came to a beautiful knoll of green, thickly covered with shrubbery and trees, and so wrapt from the

passing glance of the wayfarer, by the circuitous bendings of the stream, as to afford them the safety and secrecy they desired. The maidens informed them that they alone were in possession of the fact of its existence, having been cast upon it by a summer tempest, while wandering over the rippling waters in their birchen canoe. They found it a pleasant dwelling-place. The wild fruits and scented flowers seemed to have purposely embellished it for the habitation of content and love, and the singing birds were perpetually caroling from the branches. The vines, thickly interwoven above their heads, and covered with leaves, afforded them the desired shelter; and gladly did they appropriate, and sweetly did they enjoy, its pleasures and its privacies. But the day began to wane, and the approaching evening indicated the return of the fierce warriors from the chase. With many vows, and a tender and sweet sorrow, the maidens took their departure for the dwellings of their people, leaving the young chiefs to contemplate their new ties, and the novel situation in which they had placed themselves. Nor did the maidens forget their pledges, or prove false to their vows. Day after day did they take their way in the birchen bark, and linger till evening in the society of their beloved. The

hours passed fleetly in such enjoyments, and happy months of felicity only taught them the beauty of flowers and their scents, and the delights of an attachment before utterly unknown. But the wing of the halcyon ceased to rest on the blessed island. Impatient of inactivity, the warrior Hillaby came one day to the vine-covered cabin of Onea; his looks were sullen, and his language desponding. He spoke thus :

“ It is not meet, Onea, that the hawk should be clipped of his wings, and the young panther be caged like a deer; let us go home to our people. I am growing an old woman. I have no strength in my sinews — my knees are weak.”

“ I would go home to my people,” replied Onea, “ but cannot leave the young fawn who has taken shelter under my protection. And will Hillaby depart from Henamarsa ?”

“ Hillaby will depart from Henamarsa, but Hillaby has the cunning of the serpent, and can burrow like the hill-fox. He will no longer take the dove to his heart, dreading an enemy. He will go home to his people—he will gather the young men of the nation, and do battle for Henamarsa. Onea is a brave warrior—will he not fight for Anyta ?”

“ Onea would die for Anyta, but he would not

that Anyta should perish too. Onea would not destroy the people of his wife."

"Would they not destroy Onea? They would hang his scalp in the smoke of their wigwams—they would shout and dance about the stake when his death-song is singing. If Onea will not depart with Hillaby, he will go alone. He will bring the young warriors; and the dogs who would keep Henamarsa from his wigwam—they shall perish by his knife, and the wild boar shall grow fat upon their carcasses."

Thus spoke the elder of the two warriors, and vain were the entreaties and arguments employed by Onea to dissuade him from his purpose. The Indian habit was too strong for love, and his sense of national, not less than individual pride, together with the supineness of his present life, contrasted with that restless activity to which he had been brought up and habituated, rendered all persuasion fruitless, and destroyed the force of all arguments. Deep, seemingly, was the anguish of Henamarsa, when she learned the departure of her lover. A settled fear, however, took possession of the bosom of the gentle Anyta, and she sobbed upon the breast of the brave Onea. She felt that their happiness was at an end—that the hope of her people was insecure—that the home

of her fathers was about to suffer violation. She saw at once all the danger, and did not hesitate to whisper it in the ear of Onea. All her hope rested in the belief, that Hillaby would never succeed in tracing his way back through the intricacies of the swamp to his own people; or if he did, that he would not succeed in guiding them to the precise point in its recesses, in which her tribe had found its abode. But Onea knew better the capacities of a warrior among his people. He seized his bow and equipments, and would have taken the path after Hillaby, determined to quiet the fears of his beloved, even by the death of his late friend and companion; but the maiden restrained him. She uttered a prayer to the great spirit, for the safety of herself and people, and gave herself up to the wonted happiness of that society for which she was willing to sacrifice every thing.

V.

A new trial awaited Onea. One day Anyta came not. The canoe was paddled by Henamarsa alone. She sought him in his wigwam. She sought to take the place of his beloved in his affections, and would have loaded him with caresses.

"Where is Anyta?" asked the young warrior.

"She is no longer the bride of Onea," was the reply. "She has gone into the wigwam of a warrior of her tribe — Henamarsa will love Onea, in the place of Anyta."

"Onea will love none but Anyta," was the reply.

"But she is now the wife of Echotee, the young chief. She can no longer be yours. You will never see her more."

"I will tear her from the cabin of the dog — I will drive my hatchet into his skull," — said the infuriated warrior. He rejected all the blandishments of Henamarsa, and taunted her with her infidelity to Hillaby. She departed in anger from his presence, and he lay troubled with his meditations as to the course he should pursue with regard to Anyta. His determination was adopted, and at midnight, in a birchen canoe prepared through the day, he took his way over the broad lake to the island. It lay, but not in quiet, stretched out beautifully under the twinkling stars that shone down sweetly upon it. These, however, were not its only lights. Countless blazes illuminated the shores in every direction — and the sound of lively music came upon his ear, with an influence that chafed still more fiercely the raging spirit in his

heart. There were shouts and songs of merriment — and the whirling tread of the impetuous dancers bespoke a feast and a frolic, such as are due, among the Indians, to occasions only of the highest festivity.

Drawing his bark quietly upon the shore, without interruption, he went among the revelers. No one seemed to observe — no one questioned him. Dressed in habiliments the most fantastic and irregular, his warlike semblance did not strike the minds of the spectators as at all inconsistent with the sports they were pursuing, and he passed without impediment or check to the great hall, from whence the sounds of most extravagant merriment proceeded. He entered with the throng, in time to witness a solemn ceremonial. There came, at one side, a gallant chief, youthful, handsome, and gracefully erect. He came at the head of a chosen band of youth of his own age, attired in rich furs taken from native animals. Each of them bore a white wand, the symbol of marriage.

On the other side came a like party of maidens, dressed in robes of the whitest cotton, and bearing wands like the men. What bright creature is it that leads this beautiful array? Why does the young Muscoghee start — wherefore the

red spot on the brow of Onea ? The maiden who leads the procession, is his own, the gentle Anyta. Grief was in her face ; her eyes were dewy and sad, and her limbs so trembled that those around gathered to her support. The first impulse of Onea was to rush forward and challenge the array — to seize upon the maiden in the presence of the assembly ; and, by the strength of his arm, and the sharp stroke of his hatchet, to assert his claims to the bride in the teeth of every competitor. But the warrior was not less wise than daring. He saw that the maiden was sick at heart, and a fond hope sprung into his own. He determined to witness the progress of the ceremony, trusting something to events. They dragged her forward to the rite, passive rather than unresisting. The white wands of the two processions, males and females, were linked above the heads of Echotee and Anyta—the bridal dance was performed around them in circles, and, agreeable to the ritual of the tribe to which they belonged, the marriage was declared complete. And now came on the banqueting. The repast, fruitful of animation, proceeded, and the warriors gathered around the board, disposed alternately among the maidens, Echotee and Anyta presiding. Onea stood apart.

“ Who is he who despises our festival—why

does the young man stand away from the board? The brave man may fight and rejoice—he wears not always the war paint—he cries not for ever the war-whoop—he will come where the singing birds gather, and join in the merriment of the feast.”

Thus cried a strong voice from the company, and all eyes were turned upon Onea. The youth did not shrink from reply—

“The warrior says what is true. It is not for the brave man to scorn the festival—he rejoices at the feast. But the stranger comes of a far tribe, and she who carries the wand ~~must~~ bid him welcome, or he sits not at the board with the warriors.”

Anyta slowly rose to perform the duty imposed upon her. She had already recognised the form of her lover, and her step was tremulous and her advances slow. She waved the wand which she held in her hands, and he approached, unhesitatingly, to her side. The Indians manifested little curiosity—such a feature of character being inconsistent, in their notion, with the manliness indispensable to the warrior. Still there was something marked in the habit worn by Onea, which taught them to believe him a stranger. At such a time, however, the young men, intriguing with their dus-

ky loves, rendered disguises and deceptions so frequent, less notice ensued than might otherwise have been the case, and the repast proceeded without farther interruption. Then followed the bridal procession to the future dwelling of the couple. The whole assembly sallied forth, to the sound of discordant music, each with a flaming torch within his hand. They frolicked with wild halloos in the train of the bridal pair, waving their flaming torches in every direction. A small stream, consecrated by a thousand such occurrences, rippled along their pathway, upon approaching which, they hurled the lights into its hissing waters, leaving the entire procession in darkness. This was one part of the wonted and well known frolic. The transition from unaccustomed light to solemn darkness, producing the profoundest confusion, the merriment grew immense. One party stumbled over the other, and all were playing at contraries and cross purposes. Shouts of laughter in every direction, broke the gloom which occasioned it, and proved the perfect success of the jest.

But, on a sudden, a cry arose that the bride was missing. This, perhaps, contributed more than any thing beside to the good humor of all but the one immediately concerned, and the complaint and clamor of the poor bridegroom met with no sym-

pathy. His appeals were unheeded—his asseverations received with laughter and shouts of the most deafening description. All mirth, however, must have its end; and the joke grew serious. The bride was really missing, and every thing was in earnest and unmitigated confusion. Vainly did the warriors search—vainly did the maidens call upon the name of Anyta. She was far beyond the reach of their voices, hurrying down the quiet lake with Onea, to the green island of their early loves and unqualified affections.

There was one who readily guessed the mystery of Anyta's abduction. The heart of Henamarsa had long yearned for that of Onea. The rejection of her suit by the scrupulous warrior had changed its temper into bitterness; and a more vindictive feeling took possession of her breast. She determined to be revenged.

The warrior lay at sunset in the quiet bower, and he slept with sweet visions in his eyes. But why shrieks the young maiden, and wherefore is the strong hand upon him? Who are they that bind with thongs the free limbs of the warrior? Vainly does he struggle for his release. Many are the foes around him, and deadly the vengeance which they threaten. He looks about for Anyta—she

too is bound with thongs. Above him stood the form of Henamarsa, and he well knew who had betrayed him, yet he uttered no reproach. She looked upon him with an eye of mingled love and triumph, but he gave her no look in return. He knew her not.

They took him back to the island, and added to his bonds. They taunted him with words of scorn, and inflicted ignominious blows upon his limbs. They brought him food and bade him eat for the sacrifice ; for that, at the close of the moon, just begun, he should be subjected, with the gentle Anyta, to the torture of fire and the stake. "A Creek warrior will teach you how to die," said Onea. "You are yet children ; you know nothing," — and he shook his chains in their faces, and spat on them with contempt.

VI.

That night a voice came to him in his dungeon. Though he saw not the person, yet he knew that Henamarsa was beside him.

"Live," said the false one — "live, Onea, and I will unloose the cords about thy limbs. I will make thee free of thy keepers — I will carry thee to a quiet forest, where my people shall find thee

never." The warrior spake not, but turned his face from the tempter to the wall of his prison. Vainly did she entreat him, nor forego her prayers, until the first glimmerings of the day light urged her departure. Rising, then, with redoubled fury from his side, where she had thrown herself, she drew a knife before his eyes. The blade gleamed in his sight, but he shrunk not.

"What," said she, "if I strike thee to the heart, thou that art sterner than the she-wolf, and colder than the stone house of the adder? What if I strike thee for thy scorn, and slay thee like a fox even in his hole?"

"Is there a mountain between us, woman, and canst thou not strike?" said the warrior. "Why speakest thou to me? Do thy will, and hiss no more like a snake in my ears. Thou hast lost thy sting—I should not feel the blow from thy knife."

"Thou art a brave warrior," said the intruder, "and I love thee too well to slay thee. I will seek thee again in thy captivity, and look for thee to listen."

The last night of the moon had arrived, and the noon of the ensuing day was fixed for the execution of Onea and Anyta. Henamarsa came again to the prison of the chief, and love had full

possession of her soul. She strove to win him to his freedom upon her own conditions. She then proffered him the same boon upon his own terms; but he disdained and denied her. Deep was her affliction, and she now deplored her agency in the captivity of the chief. She had thought him less inflexible in his faith; and, judging of his, by the yielding susceptibilities of her own heart, had falsely believed that the service she offered would have sanctioned his adoption of any conditions which she might propose. She now beheld him ready for death, but not for dishonor. She saw him prepared for the last trial, and she sunk down in despair.

The hour was at hand, and the two were bound to the stake. The torches were blazing around them—the crowd assembled—the warrior singing his song of death, and of many triumphs. But they were not so to perish. Relief and rescue were at hand; and looking forth upon the lake, which his eyes took in at a glance, Onea beheld a thousand birchen canoes upon its surface, and flying to the scene of execution. He knew the warriors who approached. He discerned the warpaint of his nation; he counted the brave men, as they urged forward their vessels, and called them by their names. The warriors who surrounded him

rushed, in a panic, for their arms— but how could they contend with the choice men of the Creeks— the masters of a hundred nations? The conflict was brief, though hotly contended. The people of Onca were triumphant, and the chief and the beautiful Anyta rescued from their perilous situation. The people whom they had conquered were bound with thongs, and the council deliberated upon their destiny. Shall they go free? shall they die? were the questions— somewhat novel, it is true, in the history of the Indians, whose course of triumph was usually marked with indiscriminate massacre. The voice of Onca determined the question, and their lives were spared.

“Will you be of us and of our nation?” asked the conquerors of the conquered.

“We are the children of the sun,” was the proud reply— “and can mingle with no blood but our own.”

“Our young men will not yield the fair lake, and the beautiful island, and the choice fruits.”

“They are worthy of women and children only, and to these we leave them. We will seek elsewhere for the habitations of our people— we will go into other lands. It is nothing new to our fortunes that we should do so now. The spoiler has twice been among us, and the places that knew us

shall know us no more. Are we free to depart? Let not your young men follow to spy out our new habitations. Let them take what is ours now, but let them leave us in quiet hereafter."

"You are free to go," was the response, "and our young men shall not follow you."

The old chiefs led the way, and the young followed, singing a song of exile, to which they claimed to be familiar, and calling themselves the Seminole — a name, which, in their language, is supposed to signify, the outcast. All departed, save Anyta, and she dwelt for long years after in the cabin of Onea.

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